Introduction

A Rush County Retrospect, 1980s-1920s is the culmination of many years of work by a virtual multitude of people. As the "Acknowledgments and Credits" indicate and as Zimmer states in "A Search For History," the support through labor and services over an extended period of time by a broad base of interested individuals and groups has been a determining factor in the completion of the publication of these volumes. The citizens of Rush County have responded time and again, and they have made the project, with all of its complexities, succeed.

As with any published work, these two volumes, containing nearly one thousand pages, have behind them a vast amount of research and a vast number of resources ready and waiting for future work by other writers. The purpose of this "Introduction" is to provide an overview of the two volumes as they have come to exist and to give some indication of the nature of the resources that have been created and deposited with the Rushville Public Library by the Retrospect project.

From the start the Rush County Retrospect project has been unique in its desire to combine diverse methods and concepts of producing county history. The work of an outside professional historian, the work of the articulate and knowledgeable adult amateurs within the county, the work of the young school age citizens, oral recollections of many people, and subscription biographies have combined to produce a multifaceted, but coherent whole that illustrates well the materials and methods of modern local history. The organization of the two volumes has been a combination of deliberate planning and the forces of circumstance with many compromises along the way. Over the years of preparation the presentation of the final product has been a major concern both within and outside of Rush County. A decade of individual expectations about this product should find ample reward in the two volumes that have resulted.

The two volumes consist of several distinct sections. Volume 1 has three parts: "Change in Rural Indiana" by Zimmer, "In the Towns and Villages," and "From Rush Countians." Volume 2 has four parts: "Business History," "Organizational History," "Family History," and "Pot-Pourri."

Volume 2 has employed a traditional technique for the majority of its material—the subscription process—in order to provide both the material and publication funds. As with much of this project, the size of the positive response has been surprising to many. Within certain guidelines hundreds of businesses, industries, churches, clubs, families, and individuals have submitted written material and illustrations for inclusion in *A Rush County Retrospect.* Although these materials have gone through a basic editing process, they remain the work of their authors with all of the individual strengths and weaknesses inherent in authorship.

Within the "Organizational History" section there are brief histories of most churches that have been in the county during this period. These brief church histories have been included at no cost as an integral part of the history of Rush County. Several churches have chosen to expand their coverage and support through paid space as well.

The "Pot-Pourri" section is the positive result of all of the compromises and accidents of selection, time, and circumstance. As the volumes got larger and format was firmly established, it became impossible to integrate appropriately all of the material to be included. In addition, the desire to accommodate those last minute "finds" could be realized within this closing section that could remain flexible long beyond normal printing restrictions because of its local production.

A Rush County Retrospect opens with the assessment of twentieth century Rush County by a professional historian using

the quantitative techniques of modern social history. Zimmer from the outset was assured of independence and lack of censorship in his interpretation and approach. He was also given extensive local support for the research base that he needed. He has reviewed the process of his task in "A Search For History," starting on page 3, and elaboration here is needed only on one point.

As the process of selection and refinement took place in Zimmer's research and writing, it became clear that various topics and incidents could not be covered in his examination. From this dilemma arose the concept of vignettes—short items by Rush Countians that would focus on discrete events or topics and that would be placed at appropriate points in Zimmer's text. Readily admitting that the term "vignette" needs to be stretched to cover the length of some productions included herein, the concept has been employed throughout both volumes. Italic type has been used to set off this integrated material and avoid confusing intrusions into the flow of the surrounding narrative.

The expanded vignette concept resulted in the section "From Rush Countians." It consists of longer narratives, as well as true vignettes, by Rush County authors. The topical arrangement allows the reader to locate easily those materials that complement or elaborate upon subjects covered in other sections of the books without diverting the focus of the narrative in either place.

"In the Towns and Villages" is briefly introduced on page 191, but the nature of the material dictates a more detailed explanation here. These "town meeting" panel discussions were a follow up to the five year Rushville Consolidated High School Junior Historical Society oral history project that concentrated on individuals and subject oriented panel discussions. More than one hundred persons are included among the interviewees. Original taping was primarily reel-to-reel; cassette copies were made for transcription work and for use in the Rushville Public Library by interested individuals. These materials will continue to be a major historical resource for the county.

Although the desire to reach every "population center" in Rush County was not realized, the seventeen locations covered in this section provide a sufficient sampling of evidence from various parts of the county to present an internal perspective of the Retrospect years in Rush County. The selection of material for inclusion here has necessarily limited or filtered the perspective, but the selection fairly represents these subject areas in the existing materials. In order to provide a more complete record of the richness of this resource, however, the format of these discussions in the towns needs to be reviewed.

The focus of the panel discussions was life and living in Rush County towns and villages, and a list of questions and suggested items for discussion was provided to panelists. In most instances there also was an audience which was free to comment or question as well. The selection of material for the published volume considered primarily the following questions/topics: changes in physical appearance of the neighborhood; changes in day to day lifestyle; businesses, stores, and professional people in the neighborhood; industries; travel then and now, especially to and from Rushville; where local people gathered; what recreation opportunities have existed; the school, community, and consolidation; important changes and their effect on the community; and the future of the community.

Material on the following questions/topics was primarily eliminated from consideration for the segments published here: churches; community celebrations and activities; child rearing and attitudes about behavior; health care and illnesses; disasters in the community; exciting or notorious events; outstanding citizens or town characters; and the best and worst of living in the community.

The tapes for these sessions contain information, stories, and incidents that could be classified and used in various ways. In

spite of the uniform approach, the results in raw form are quite diverse. Excerpts from this town material have been used as vignettes throughout both volumes as well.

As the forthcoming separate index for the set will emphasize, the two volumes complement each other well. The progression in the volumes is from the general overview to the specifics of local and family history and from the external perception to the internal perception. The total product—the revelation of Rush County from 1920 to the present—is a cumulative one; the various parts, with their different perspectives, reinforce one another. To paraphrase from several of the town meetings, until they stopped and looked, many did not realize how much good there has been and is in Rush County. It is this feeling of optimism about Rush County that sets this history apart. It is not just a look back; it also provides a statement and a vision for Rush Countians for the future.

Pamela J. Bennett, Director
Indiana Historical Bureau

Acknowledgments and Credits

Volume 1 has been produced under the editorial control of the Indiana Historical Bureau, an agency of the State of Indiana. Historical Bureau editors, Robert G. Barrows and Shirley S. McCord, have had direct responsibility for working with the manuscript of Donald T. Zimmer and for carrying out all proofreading tasks for the volume. Historical Bureau director, Pamela J. Bennett, has assumed editorial responsibility for the sections "In the Towns and Villages" and "From Rush Countians" and has handled photograph selection and layout of the volume in consultation with the Rush County editors and editorial committee.

Volume 2 has been produced under the editorial control of the Rush County Historical Society. Emy Waggener has had editorial responsibility for the volume and has handled the layout of the volume. The following persons served as copy editors and proofreaders: Mary Lee Ball, Joan Bosse, Alvene Coons, Faith Ellison, Morieda Fordice, Ruth Ann Foster, Linda Gray, Martha Hogsett, Linda Levi, Mary Johnson, Dorothy Lipscome, Janet Mauzy, Nancy Oster, Jean Owens, Jeanne Starr, Mary Helen Stephen, Phil Schermer, Kay Wedeking, and Alice Wiley.

The State Editorial Advisory Board included Pamela J. Bennett, Indiana Historical Bureau, Donna Bucove, Indiana Committee for the Humanities, Donald F. Carmony, Indiana University, Bloomington, F. Gerald Handfield, Indiana Historical Society, Thomas Krasean, Indiana Historical Society, Irene D. Neu, Indiana University, Bloomington, and Gayle Thornbrough, Indiana Historical Society.

The Rush County Editorial Advisory Board and Steering Committee included Paul Barada, Albert Hodge, Nancy Oster, Isabel Pike, Joe Pike, Jim Scott, Mary Helen Stephen, Emy Waggener, Roy (Bob) Waggener, Jr., Mary Louise Wilson, and John Worth.

Melvin Gray has served as art consultant and designed and produced the cover and title page art. Linda Gray has served as photography editor for the volumes. Consultation and production with regard to photographs was provided by A. Hartwell Coons, Jeff Emsweller, and Daniel Green (Rushville) and F. Gerald Handfield and Tim Peterson, Indiana Historical Society.

Vignette and essay copy was collected under the direction of Eleanor Arnold and Mary Helen Stephen. The Reverend Joseph Delgatto produced the church biographies in Volume 2. Nancy Oster and Donna Sutton produced the Hoosier Homestead Award section in Volume 2.

Oral history material was gathered by the Rushville Consolidated High School Junior Historical Society under the direction of Albert Hodge; students deserving special mention are Chris Becraft, Chris Cameron, Bill Gulde, Nick Kile, Ronda Kuhn, John McCane, Debora Rigsbee, Matt Snyder, and Paula Stevens. Other members of the Rush County Historical Society working with this facet of the project were Linda Levi, Joe Pike, and Bob Waggener.

Business and organization personnel included the project coordinator, Bob Waggener, and the financial consultant, Jack Payne. Guarantors are the Arlington State Bank, First Federal Savings and Loan, the First National Bank of Mays, the Rush County National Bank, the Rushville National Bank, and the State Bank of Carthage.

Project treasurers have been Budge Roller, Avis Brown, and Wilma Wainwright. Project secretaries have been Martha Hogsett, Linda Levi, Dorothy Lipscome, and Debbie Mahan Richardson. Sales and public relations have been handled by Paul Barada, Ed Roehling, and David Stokes.

Special volunteer services and facilities have been provided by Little Hoosiers and Sponsors, Mullins Abstract Company, the Purdue University Extension Office, the Rushville Boys' Club,

the Rushville Retired Teachers, the Rushville Public Library, the Rushville Consolidated Schools, and the Rush County Chamber of Commerce.

The Rush County Board of Commissioners early in the history project worked out an arrangement by which the history staff could use the copying facilities and other research facilities of the recorder's office. This gesture has been of immense help in checking and editing materials. The personal interest and cooperation of recorders Martha Alexander and Mary Caroline Kinder and their staffs have been indispensable. The strong support of county auditors Budge Roller, Catherine Roller, and Carole Rigsbee has helped to establish a good working relationship with county government. Lending their support were commissioners Charles Amick, Lowell Angle, Earl Frank Priest, Darrell Ronan, and Marvin Vanatta.

The Budget Loan Corporation housed, lighted, warmed, cooled, and equipped the volunteer staff starting in December, 1983. It provided office space, coffee, computer service, and every amenity of modern business quarters. We were suite mates with other Budget enterprises, and their various staffs went far beyond normal community courtesy in sharing space and extending long term hospitality. This prolonged gesture seems to us the height of corporate generosity.

Custom Printers, which produced Volume 2 (including the biographical material with ten thousand opportunities for wrong dates, wrong names, and much misspelling), is under the same Budget roof, only ten steps away from our quarters. It was valuable to have shared facilities where many questions about difficult typescripts could be asked and answered by opening a door. Over and above their printing expertise, Custom Printers' employees forebore our omnipresent amateurism and, without much show of pain, led the book to the binder's door.

Harcourt Outlines generously cooperated with the project when we decided to add church sketches, Hoosier Homesteads, vignettes, and other narratives to Volume 2. As their corporate contribution to the project, they set the type for these additions at no charge—an unexpected and much appreciated windfall.

Photography by Green has for many years served as the project's photography laboratory. Dan Green and his staff have given unstintingly of time and material in providing original photographs and copies of photographs for the printer.

The Rushville *Republican* for eight years has printed hundreds of news stories, essays, and vignettes pertaining to the Retrospect project. During the first thirty days of the 1984 spring sales promotion on two occasions the *Republican* inserted, at no charge, complete sales flyers and order forms. In addition, the paper matched with free space all advertising purchased by the project.

Radio Station WRCR has been a firm and constant supporter of the history project. Since its inception in 1976 WRCR has aired many programs explaining and promoting the project. Selections from manuscripts have been broadcast to preview the contents of the completed volumes. Through the final year of production, the station gave much public service program time in the project's behalf. It has consistently matched paid advertising time with free time, as well.

The Creative Arts Association of Rush County has helped to add a light texture to the pages of *Retrospect*. Its permission to use drawings from *Rush County, 1822-1972, an artists' notebook*, edited by Emy Waggener, *Rush County 1976*, edited by Willard D. McCane, and a 1966 portfolio, made this pleasant touch possible. Other special drawings were graciously made by members of the association.

Three organizations outside of Rush County deserve special thanks.

The Indiana Historical Society provided the project with three advisors. Executive Secretary Gayle Thornbrough cooperated also in the use of staff help and resources of the society. The long term interest and cooperation was essential to the project.

The Indiana Historical Bureau undertook the formidable task of editing Volume 1 of *A Rush County Retrospect*. The bureau's no nonsense approach to county history merged the professional and amateur staffs that saw the publication project to its completion.

Last, but certainly not least, is the Indiana Committee for the Humanities, which provided generous funding for Zimmer's research and writing as well as other aspects of the project. Donna Bucove gave constant support and encouragement to the completion of the project.

Finally, we acknowledge the many contributions of time, substance, materials, and talent from the following named and unnamed groups of volunteers (there are hundreds of individuals): volunteers who compiled mailing lists, addressed, stuffed, and sorted envelopes, telephoned or directly solicited book orders and biographies, and did other literature distributing tasks; writers of essays, vignettes, and biographies; newspaper researchers for Zimmer; persons who submitted photographs for copying; and individuals and groups who were interviewed.

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Rush County Players

Concluding Banquet Durbin Hotel December 1, 1976

Rush County Bicentennial Committee

Rush County Historical Society

A Search For History

The first and most often asked question of an historian writing county history is "Why?" Why write a county history? The answer is both simple and complex. A colleague of mine once answered the question with the question "Why not?" Every group, large or small, is entitled to know as much of its past as can be known. Whether for family, county, or nation, the past is both heritage and prologue. It tells them from whence they have come and who they are. It helps them to realize they are not as bad as they are portrayed by others, nor as good as they think; not as different as others may think, nor as unique as they may like to believe.

The other reason for writing county history is that it is history in microcosm. If you find saints and sinners, heroes and scoundrels in state and national history, you find them in local history as well. Shakespeare said long ago "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." All the roles played on the larger stage are played on the lesser stage as well. To understand the one is to better understand the other. This is not to say that state and national history is simply local history writ large. There are no presidents or legislators, no statesmen or generals, who set policies and programs that lead to glory or catastrophe. There are no captains of industry or titans of finance who alter the course of events. There are, however, mayors and councilmen, commissioners and police chiefs, bankers and bosses, who make decisions that affect the lives of those around them. The larger stage is far off, hard to see, and often harder still to understand. The lesser stage is closer, more real, if not always easier to understand. Hence from the familiar comes more appreciation and understanding of the unfamiliar.

The essential job of the historian is to promote understanding. Someone once said an historian gets the facts, a good historian attempts to understand them. I would not presume

that I am a good historian, but I have assembled a body of facts and I have tried to understand them. Neither of these tasks has been as simple nor as easy for local history as one might think, and surely not as simple nor as easy as I once thought. All the complexity of events, all the multiplicity of causes and effects, all the human drama found in state and national history is found in local history as well. One should not undertake the study of county history in a light and cavalier fashion. To do so is to court failure, or worse still, to write pseudo history. Failure can be forgiven, but pseudo history is like a placebo that is given to a patient; it gives a false sense of well-being and promises more than it can deliver.

My first contact with Rush County came in the summer of 1976 when in response to a request from John Worth, a local attorney and history buff, I drove there from my home in Angola, Indiana. When I arrived in Rushville I found the community in the midst of a festive celebration of the nation's bicentennial. The arrangement I had made with John was to meet him in his office as soon as I reached town. As his secretary escorted me into his office I found myself greeted by three gentlemen dressed in knee britches, waistcoats, silk stockings, and buckle shoes, holding tricorns jauntily in their arms. After I recovered from the momentary shock of feeling I had stepped back two centuries, I recall thinking, "Now these are people who really take their history seriously." Though their dress was explained by their need to go directly from our meeting to a performance of a bicentennial play, little did I realize then how right my first impression was.

John, whom I had not previously met, introduced himself and his friends, Al Hodge and Paul Barada. They were members of the Rush County Historical Society, which had conceived the idea of updating a 1920 history written to commemorate the community's centennial. John had contacted me at the suggestion of Donald Carmony, a professor of history at Indiana University and a native of Rush County. The society, as part of the bicentennial celebration, had raised money by public subscription to engage a professional historian to undertake the project of writing a history of Rush County from 1920 to the present. They had tried without success to interest several more well established historians in the project before approaching me. I had never previously written a county history, nor anything dealing with the twentieth century. My field was essentially nineteenth century urban history. In our initial meeting we discussed the project in general terms, since they did not know much about what they wanted beyond an updating of the 1920 volume and I knew nothing of the county's history.

With nothing definite decided the meeting closed on a cordial, if vague, note and my hosts rushed off to put themselves back into the eighteenth century. I returned to Angola and waited to hear what the society had decided. I waited some time, long enough, in fact, to have assumed they had given up on the idea or, more likely, found someone else more suitable to the project. I mention this because it illustrates, I think, several characteristics of working in cooperation with local groups. One is that vague generalizations have a way of becoming permanent decisions. From that initial meeting stems my entire commitment to the society and their commitment to me. Nothing more formal in the way of a contract or agreement has ever been entered into. Indeed, I do not recall saying in so many words, "Yes, I will undertake the project" or their saying, "You are the person we want." Instead it was enough that I expressed interest in them and they in me; through these many years, although many personal bonds have secured our relationship, that has been the sole formal bond that has held us together.

The other characteristic of working in cooperation with local groups worth noting is that nothing happens quickly. Historians who are used to working alone and setting their own pace have to learn patience. Local leaders have to urge, cajole, and gently nudge; they cannot direct, they must convince; they cannot act unilaterally, they must create consensus. Much as they

would like to move ahead with all deliberate speed, they can only move as fast as their most reluctant constituents. Even then there will always be some who are dissatisfied with all but their own way of doing things.

When it finally became apparent that I would be writing this history, it did not seem to me to be a monumental task. I had previously written urban history and, though a county is larger, it is a good deal smaller than a state or nation—and, as everyone knows, histories of states and nations are being written all the time. In my naiveté, I did, I must admit, wonder why there were so few county histories written by historians and so many written by antiquarians. This I attributed to lack of interest by historians in so narrow a world. With so many dramatic and engrossing events happening on the state and national level, what interest could historians have in county history? Such a question did not deter me, as perhaps it did others, because I felt everyday lives to be as engrossing as those of great state and national figures, and local events as dramatic, albeit not as far-reaching.

The first task was the collection of evidence. Since many of the participants in the county's contemporary history were still living and not much time had elapsed to ravage the written record, this did not seem too difficult. Such a view, however, did not take into account that all the frustrations commonly associated with the collection of historical evidence are also present in contemporary local research; gaps in information occur, methods of recording information change, types of reports once kept are no longer kept, and information once readily available is no longer provided. Nor does it take into account how the sheer volume of evidence can make collection difficult. A single courthouse holds tons of records, which makes sorting them and, more important still, making sense out of them, a problem. Similarly a county may have hundreds of residents with needed information—but how do you find them and, equally important, how do you get them to help you?

The availability and completeness of county newspapers made them the logical starting point for the collection of evidence. The Recorder's Office in the courthouse had bound volumes of the daily Rushville *Republican* covering the entire period of inquiry as well as random volumes of the weekly Milroy *Press*. In addition, bound volumes of the weekly Carthage *Citizen* for the entire period were also available through the Recorder's Office. Here were literally thousands of pages of local history, a daily chronicle of all the major and many of the minor events of the county. At first I tried diligently to look at every page, but it eventually became apparent that if I were ever to progress beyond this stage another approach to exploiting these newspapers would have to be found. The solution to this problem, the use of surrogates, became an essential way for me to deal with large quantities of information most efficiently. Similarly, these surrogates—volunteer research assistants—were valuable in other areas as well, particularly in the area of taped oral interviews, vignette writing, and the collection of photographs and memoirs.

A few key members of the historical society and I devised a plan whereby volunteers were recruited from the society and elsewhere to be my research assistants. Periodic meetings were then arranged with these volunteers to instruct them in the specific topics of interest to me and in my peculiar form of note taking. In similar fashion volunteers in other areas were given instruction on questioning interviewees, on topics for vignettes, and on photo and memorabilia collecting. This wide-ranging use of volunteers then created the problem of supervision and direction, which was handled by the "brown bag" meeting. This was a luncheon meeting of key volunteers who were supervising a specific group of volunteer researchers. At these meetings materials collected would be turned over to me, additional subjects of research pointed out, and problems discussed. Initially these meetings were held as frequently as once a week. As the project progressed the meetings were held much less

frequently, but the necessity for these and other types of meetings with key leaders never ceased entirely.

These meetings with key leaders were especially helpful to me because, besides keeping me informed of the various activities and keeping all of us involved in the project working along the same lines, they put me in direct contact with people who were among the most knowledgeable about the past in their community and the most historically minded. These key leaders became for me a collective memory of the county's past. The written record alone can mislead, as can memory alone; together they offer the best chance for historical accuracy.

Despite our efforts to minimize risk the use of surrogates was not without problems for historical inquiry, particularly in the area of newspaper research. This had to do not so much with the quality of the work as it had to do with the tedium associated with research and note taking. The historian's drudgery soon began to take its toll on volunteers, and adjustment had to be made in their use. Again a meeting with key leaders brought forth a new plan. This still involved the use of volunteers, but now instead of taking verbatim notes the volunteers took only article headline notes, along with a notation of the date and the source. These notes I then used to determine if I wanted verbatim information from the article. If I did, the notes were returned to the Recorder's Office where the articles were photocopied. The copied pages were then distributed to volunteers who put them in the five-by-eight inch size I used for storage, organization, and writing. This worked surprisingly well for me and for the volunteers. Only occasionally thereafter did I have to return to the newspapers to locate information that I knew from other sources should be there, or to clarify or complete a note.

While volunteer researchers worked the newspapers, did oral history taping, collected pictures, wrote vignettes and the like, I was free to carry on my own research at the various county and city archives, the Rush County Historical Society archives, the Rushville Public Library, the Indiana State Library, and other public and private repositories. After two summers of such research and the accumulation of numerous file boxes of notes, it was time to begin digesting the information. Unfortunately, by this time the funds obtained from public subscription were running out and not one word had been written about the history of Rush County. To say the least, this caused great concern among the local citizens, particularly among those who saw little need for all this research and felt a creditable history could be written without it. Fortunately a core group, spurred on by Bob Waggener and Al Hodge, was determined to see the project through.

Also fortuitously, the Indiana Committee for the Humanities had a policy change that allowed them to support local history projects which included public support and involvement. Our project appeared to fit their guidelines perfectly. With a great deal of hope and not a little anxiety a grant proposal was prepared and submitted to the ICH and the wait began. Rejection by the ICH would have delayed the project, but it is doubtful that it would have killed it. Other avenues of support would have been explored and valuable time and energy lost on writing grant proposals, but the determination to see the project through was strong. Such concern was academic, however, because the ICH liked the project and gave it the support it needed. The Committee's main stipulation beyond what we were already doing was for an expansion of public involvement. This was done by taking our activities beyond the historical society to the community at large through panel discussions and media presentations of information and materials gathered during the research. Needless to say the burden placed on key leaders of the project increased immeasurably. Thankfully they were equal to the task.

The oral history portion of the project was expanded to include taped panel discussions focusing on specific historical themes—agriculture in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, or the

effects of World War II on life and living in the county. People in the county most knowledgeable about the events associated with these themes were identified and brought together in a panel to answer questions put to them by a moderator. The public was invited to listen to the discussion and time was provided for them to ask questions of their own and to volunteer their own information related to the theme. To reach a larger audience tapes of these panels were then played on the local radio station as a public service. The panel discussions, and there were dozens of them over the next several summers, were then transcribed and made available as a research source. Originally these panel discussions were held in Rushville, but subsequently they were conducted in virtually every hamlet and village in the county.

The vignettes being collected from long-time county residents about specific incidents in the county's history were also shared with the whole community through publication in the local newspaper and readings over the radio. In addition, high school and junior high school students were given assignments in their English and history classes to write vignettes based on interviews with long-time county residents. These were judged and the best were also printed in the newspaper and read over the airways. The media also carried appeals for county residents to search their photo albums for pictures related to specific topics and themes. These pictures were collected and distinctive ones printed in the newspaper and put on display. Through such means and others—like the old fashioned ice cream social and the donation by the county commissioners of the cost of photocopying newspaper articles—the community at large became actively involved in the project.

While the community thus became more historically involved and valuable information for the history was being gathered, my writing of the history moved ahead. Because the local leaders of the project felt that they would not have the expertise to judge the merit of any finished work, they decided to recruit an editorial board from among the state's historical community. The board they recruited included history professors from Indiana University and professional editors from the Indiana Historical Society, the Indiana Historical Bureau, and the Indiana Committee for the Humanities. The editorial board read each of the several drafts of the history and offered their critical comment on both content and style. Similarly, drafts of chapters were submitted to local residents for comment on content and accuracy. Needless to say neither the board nor the local citizens are responsible for any of the deficiencies in the history.

Never, I think, has a history owed so much to so many. From beginning to end so many have given so much of their time and energy that any list would surely leave out more names than it would include. Bob Waggener, however, must be mentioned, for without his perseverance it is safe to say that this history of Rush County not only would not have been written, it may never even have been begun. Any county that might contemplate such a project had better have a Bob Waggener, or forget it before it begins. Through the many crises the project faced, he never publicly admitted any doubts of its ultimate success, though he may have had some. There never was a problem for which he could not and did not find a solution. It may not have been the best solution, it may not even have been the one he liked, but it was one that worked and kept the project going. He may have lost sight of details, if he neglected to record them in his ever-present notebook, but he never lost sight of his goal. He is living proof that in an age of depersonalization one person *can* make a difference.

It is nearly futile, I suppose, to explain the rewards of growing up and living out your days in a small town such as Manilla. New Yorkers or Londoners or Parisians would probably find little romantic and even less exciting about endless cornfields and excruciatingly slow life styles. We have no skyscrapers or bright lights. Life here is, by cosmopolitan standards, boring.

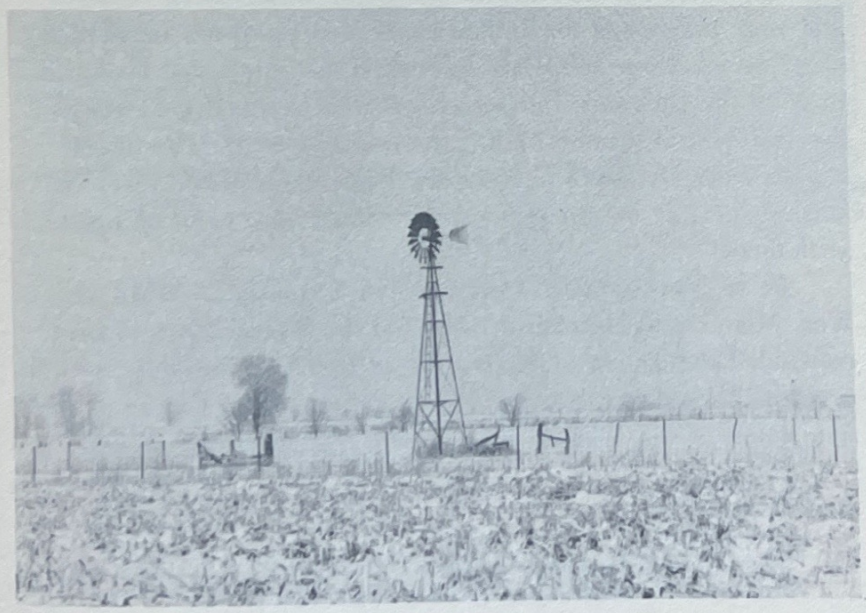
We are forever searching for words which enhance our quiet existence which do not sound as if we are justifying stagnation. The explanations of small town life never come out quite the way they are meant, and to expound on the issue just seems to muddle things. We have little in Rush County that sounds intriguing or exciting, and those are the unfortunate standards by which outside people might judge our existence. So why is this such a good place to grow up and continue to live?

Simply saying that we are used to living here isn't enough. To my way of thinking, being used to a place might as easily mean being resigned to living there, and resignation and happiness are far from synonymous. Contentment better describes the attitude.

My childhood is memories of baseball games in the schoolyard lasting literally eight or nine hours with only reluctant breaks for meals. It's hot August afternoons spent fishing off an old iron bridge, or walking country roads searching ditches for priceless pop bottles. The memories are always peaceful and painless, and I do not doubt that my mind has conveniently disposed of the bad moments. They are so far outweighed as not to matter.

Although the days are now spent working, the fishing is all too infrequent, and pop bottles are nearly a thing of the past, the contentment found in a rural life remains.

Dan LeClerc, Manilla



Chapter 1

In The Beginning: Rush County To 1920

Rush County, Indiana, is a rich agricultural county located on the eastern side of the south central portion of the state on land drained by the East Fork of White River. Centuries prior to the arrival of the first white men, prehistoric Indians had occupied the area. Several mounds, one of which was one hundred and six feet in diameter and fifteen feet in height, built by these prehistoric Indians, were found by the early settlers in Posey Township. When first discovered giant beech trees covered the mounds, but subsequent felling of the trees and yearly plowing of the land have long since leveled the mounds.[1] The later Indians of record who occupied the area preceded by only a little the arrival of the white man. Like their prehistoric predecessors, however, they too have left little to remind us of their presence on the land. An arrowhead here, a fist hatchet there, turned up by the farmer's plowshare, and Ben Davis Creek, named for a chief of the Delaware tribe, are about all that survive to recall their tenure on the land.

The Delaware Indians, who occupied the land when the white man arrived, were among the most advanced and civilized of the East Coast Indian tribes. According to the *Walam Olum* or migration legend of the Delawares, they lived in southern Indiana in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries before reaching the tidewater of the Delaware River about 1400. Taking their name from the river valley where they settled, they early on adopted some European ways, and many became Christians. Peaceful at heart, they preferred migration to conflict with either Indians or whites. Hence when pressured by the Iroquois about 1740, they began to move west, reaching the land of the present state of Indiana about 1770. There, with the permission

[1] *History of Rush County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1888), p. 278.

of the Miami and Piankashaw, they settled between the Ohio and White rivers.[2] The main settlements of the Delaware were on the upper West Fork of White River. In what later became Rush County, their principal village was located on the banks of Ben Davis Creek in Union Township. The Delaware called the creek Mahoning in remembrance of the river at their former home in Pennsylvania. White settlers later named it after the Delaware chief.[3]

Dr. John Arnold, one of the early settlers of Rush County, vividly described the hunting grounds of this Delaware village. "This country," he wrote in 1879, "was very heavily timbered; indeed I have no recollection of ever having seen in my travels, anywhere, so many large, tall trees standing on an acre as could here be found. Not only the number and size of the trees, but also the kinds of timber found here proved the strength and richness of the virgin soil which they shaded. The growth and kinds of timber indicate with infallible certainty to the observant traveler, the quality of the land over which he may be rushing . . . essentially a beechen country . . . ." One tree, measured three feet from the ground, had a diameter of twelve feet and a circumference of thirty-six feet. Its straight trunk rose over sixty feet without a limb and then divided into two immense, symmetrical branches.[4]

On the bottoms and lowlands grew burr oak, butternut, white elm, sycamore, shellbark and thick shellbark hickories, swamp ash, soft maple, hackberry, and alder. On the uplands grew sugar maple, blue and gray ash, red elm, poplar, wild cherry, buckeye, white and black oak, pig-nut hickory, linden, coffee nut, honey locust, mulberry, and black walnut. Rush County, Arnold recalled, "was particularly rich in black walnut timber, which for quality and quantity cannot be equaled by any other county in this or any other state." In the late 1870s when he penned his reminiscences he wrote, "Within the last few years the trade in walnut timber has attained gigantic proportions and an amount almost incalculable has been shipped [to eastern markets] and still a very large amount remains."[5]

This majestic climax forest provided the Delaware a bountiful hunting ground. Wild turkey, grouse, pheasant, many varieties of wild duck, gray fox, beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, weasel, raccoon, and the fierce wildcat, abounded. The Delaware enjoyed unchallenged dominion over this veritable Garden of Eden for less than a generation. Clark's Grant in 1783 and the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 marked the beginning of the continual encroachment of white settlement on Indian lands in the Indiana Territory. Following the 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne, the domain of the Delaware lay directly in the path of white expansion. When Indiana became a state in 1816, more than 60,000 white settlers lived south of the Indian lands. More than half of these (38,770) lived in the seven southeastern counties and were pressuring the Indian lands directly to the north and west.[6] In what one historian[7] has called an "American land grab," in 1818 the Delaware Indians transferred to the United States the vast central portion of Indiana (see Figure 1). The transfer required the Delaware to leave the land within three years and cleared the way for the general northward movement of white settlement.

At St. Mary's, Ohio, from October 2 through 6, 1818, the Wea, Miami, and Delaware tribes and the national government concluded the Treaty of St. Mary's, or the New Purchase, which gave the United States title to most of the central section of the state south of the Wabash River and a line northwest of and

[2]William E. Wilson, *Indiana: A History* (Bloomington, Ind., 1966), p. 20; John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana: From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth* (4 vols., New York, 1954), 1:21.

[3]*History of Rush County*, p. 283.

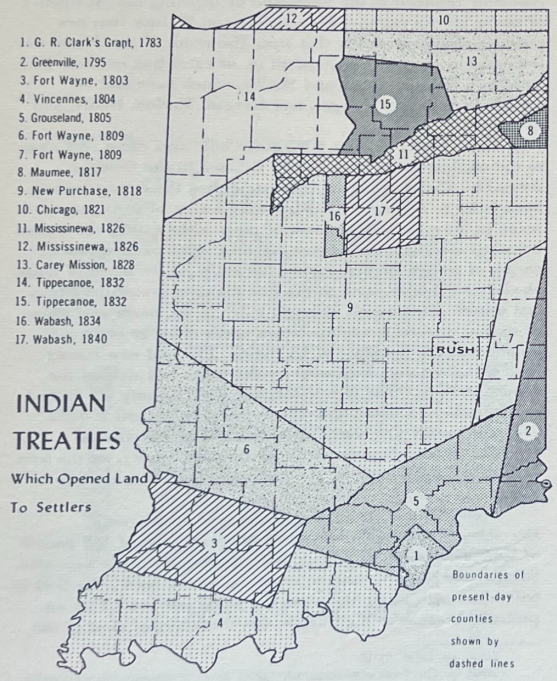
[4]A. L. Gary and E. B. Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County, Indiana* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1921), 1:58.

[5]*Ibid.*, 1:58-59.

[6]Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*, 1:164.

[7]Bert Anson, *The Miami Indians* (Norman, Okla., 1970), p. 179.

Figure 1. Indian Treaty Boundaries



Source: Robert C. Kingsbury, *An Atlas of Indiana* (1970), p. 7.

parallel to the Wabash west of the Tippecanoe River.[8] The land that now comprises Rush County lay on the extreme eastern portion of the New Purchase (see Figure 1). The first white man to settle on these lands was probably Enoch Russell, a resident of Franklin County. Shortly after the signing of the treaty, Russell and a man named Zach Collins went into the New Purchase and put up a cabin in order to hunt through the winter. The cabin they built was about one-and-a-half miles north of the present village of New Salem. In the spring of 1819, Russell brought his family from Franklin County to the cabin, and Collins built himself another nearby.[9]

Because land sales had not yet begun, Russell and Collins were so-called squatters on the land. Others soon followed, for the most part humble folk who possessed little save a determination to benefit from the opportunity offered by nature's bounty. Dr. Arnold has left a description of one of these squatters, Jacob Dewey by name. "He was a wild looking fellow," Arnold wrote, "scarcely ever wearing anything on his head, except nature's covering of long, tangled, tawny locks; generally barefooted, with his buckskin breeches rolled up to his knees and his shirt sleeves rolled up above his elbows." Dewey had come from adjacent Fayette County, and Arnold presumed him to be a New Englander. His most valuable possessions and indeed almost his only worldly possessions were a pair of oxen, a dog, a knife, an ax, and a flintlock long rifle. With his ax and the oxen he helped his neighbors clear the trees from the land, and with his dog and long rifle he hunted his food. In this manner he managed a subsistence living. "The furniture of his cabin," Arnold continued, "was scanty and of the rudest description. The walls were ornamented with the skins of wild animals shot or

[8]Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*, 1:204; George Pence and Nellie C. Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries: Territory, State, and County* (Indianapolis, 1933), p. 34; Charles J. Kappler (comp. and ed.), *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties* (2 vols., Washington, D. C., 1903), 2:117-24.

[9]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:37-38.

trapped by him . . . whatever might be the poverty of his surroundings, his table was always bountifully supplied with the best of venison, wild turkey, etc." Dewey lived in the area some three or four years until it became too crowded to suit his tastes. Then he pushed farther west where the settlers were not as numerous and the game more plentiful. Dr. Arnold concluded, "He seemed to have no desire to own land and make himself a permanent home, and I have no doubt that he lived and died a very poor but very happy man."[10]

Those who first settled the lands later comprising Rush County had no legal right to the land. Their "squatter claims" involved no more than a few acres adjacent to their simple cabins. Like their Indian predecessors and neighbors, they were essentially hunters and gatherers who harvested the natural bounty of the land. What "improvements" they made to the land they hoped to sell to the more affluent settlers who succeeded them. Such settlers did not come in any numbers until completion of the land survey that began immediately after the Indians had ceded the land to the United States. The surveyors finished their work by April 29, 1820, and the land was opened to buyers at the Brookville land office on October 1, 1820.[11]

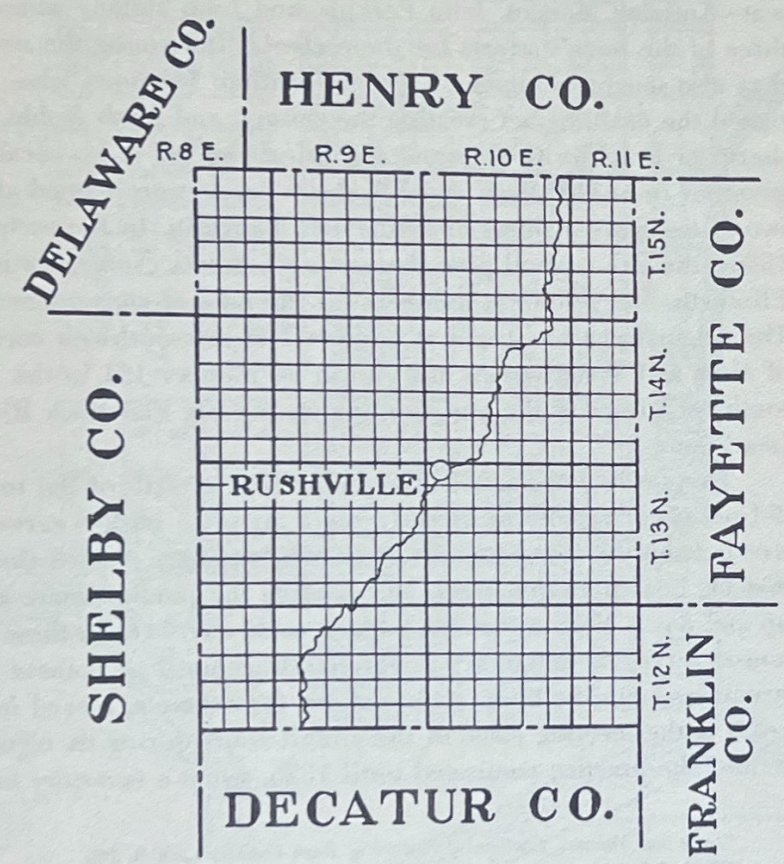
As the surveying and sale of public land progressed, the state set about organizing the "Congress lands." In 1820, the Indiana General Assembly organized the entire tract purchased at St. Mary's by enlarging Randolph, Franklin, and Jennings counties, and by dividing the remainder into two huge counties—Delaware, east of the second principal meridian, and Wabash, west of it.[12] Then the General Assembly renewed the debate over the proper size of counties that had begun in the convention that established statehood. Many convention delegates had argued that no new county should be established that included less than four hundred square miles. In the session of 1821-22, the General Assembly returned to the discussion by debating the expediency of laying off the counties of Delaware and Wabash into new counties of approximately that size. The result of the debate was the creation of seven counties, all in, or extending into, the New Purchase: Decatur, Rush, and Shelby, which have had no additional boundary changes, and Morgan, Marion, Henry, and Putnam.[13]

Rush County with its 409 square mile area came very close to the minimum size for a county debated in the General Assembly. The enabling act that established the county set its boundaries to begin "at the south-west corner of section twenty-seven in township twelve north of range eight east of the second principal meridian; thence east eighteen miles to the south-east corner of section twenty-eight in township twelve north of range eleven east, thence north to the line dividing townships fifteen and sixteen; thence west eighteen miles to the north-west corner of section three in township fifteen north of range eight east; thence south to the place of beginning. The said new county shall be known and designated by the name and style of the county of Rush." The statute forming Rush County was passed on December 31, 1821, and was to take effect April 1, 1822.[14] The new county was bounded on the east by Fayette and Franklin counties, on the south by Decatur County, on the west by Shelby County, and on the north by Henry County (see Figure 2).

From October, 1820, when land sales began, until December, the Brookville land office sold a total of 168 parcels of land. The following year an additional 278 parcels were sold. Sales varied from 80 (the minimum allowable under the law) to 640 acres, with 80 or 160 acres the usual amount.[15] This was probably because of the humble circumstances of most of the

[10] *Ibid.*, 1:45-47.
[11] *Ibid.*, 1:37.
[12] Pence and Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries*, pp. 34-35.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30, 37-38.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 716; *Laws of Indiana*, 1821-22, p. 62; C. S. Simmons, *Soil Survey of Rush County, Indiana* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Series 1930, No. 44), p. 3.
[15] Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:60.

Figure 2. Rush County Boundaries



Source: George Pence and Nellie Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries: Territory, State, and County* (1933), p. 717.

settlers and because of the fact that the Land Law of 1820 had abolished the sale of land on credit. To help compensate for the abolition of credit the national government reduced the price from $2 to $1.25 an acre. Thus for as little as one hundred dollars a settler could obtain an 80 acre homestead site. Those who came to the area in these early years settled close by each other in order that they might assist and be assisted by their neighbors. Hence there grew up from the beginning islands of settlement that developed on the basis of mutual dependence and assistance. Side by side Yankees joined Kentuckians, Virginians, Pennsylvania "Dutchmen," Quakers from the Carolinas, Tennesseans, and here and there Englishmen and Irishmen, in a cooperative struggle against the Indiana wilderness.[16]

The commissioners appointed by the enabling act forming the county met in the spring of 1822 at the cabin of Stephen Simms, which was located just south of the present site of Rushville, to establish the framework of local government. They set up six townships—Union, Ripley, Noble, Washington, Richland, and Orange. Then on June 17, 1822, they selected the site for the county seat and named it Rushville.[17] Ironically the man these early pioneers sought to honor by naming their county and their county seat after him—Benjamin Rush—did not hold them in particularly high regard. The famous physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence once observed tartly: "The first settler in the woods is generally the man who has outlived his credit or fortune in the cultivated parts."[18] Subsequent commissioners added seven other townships—Green (1823), Rushville (1823), Walker (1826), Center (1830), Jackson (1830), Anderson (1830), and Posey (1830). By 1840, Green

[16] *Ibid.*; William C. Latta, *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture* (Lafayette, Ind., 1938), p. 352.

[17] Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:60, 200-1, 208; Pence and Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries*, p. 716.

[18] Quotation in Sydney Harris, "Thoughts at Large," Fort Wayne *Journal-Gazette*, July 28, 1983.

Township had been abandoned and county organization settled on the twelve townships that still comprise the county.[19]

Among the settlers who came into the county in its first years perhaps none was more important than Dr. William B. Laughlin. Laughlin was born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1778. He went to school there and subsequently studied under Benjamin Rush, the most influential American medical scientist of his day. In 1812, Laughlin moved with his wife and family to Scott County, Kentucky, where he taught school for four years. When Indiana became a state, he moved to Brookville where he again taught school and helped survey Rush and the other counties created from the New Purchase. It was at his suggestion and through his influence that Rush County was named in honor of his friend and former teacher. At Brookville Laughlin purchased the land where Rushville now stands and in 1821 moved his family there. That same year he built the first grist mill in the county. Its mill wheel was driven by water from a pond he created by constructing a dam across the Big Flat Rock River. It was in his log cabin, after he had donated 75 acres of his land to the county for a county seat, that the commissioners selected his land for the county seat and named it Rushville. Besides the dam and grist mill, Laughlin built the first school, the first academy, and provided money for the building of the first church in Rushville. He died in 1836 and is buried in the old Lower Graveyard in Rushville.[20]

The first sale of town lots in Rushville was made at Laughlin's mill on July 29, 1822. The grid pattern of the town plat was to be the same as that of Connersville, in neighboring Fayette County, but with one additional street to join the public square. The town fathers regarded this additional street as quite an improvement over the Connersville plan because it gave access to the courthouse from four sides instead of three.[21] The public square was bounded on the north by Ruth Street, on the east by Perkins Street, on the south by Noble Street, and on the west by Main Street. Water Street was the only street platted to the south of Noble; Julian the only street east of Perkins; and Morgan the only street west of Main. To the north of Ruth Street there were two streets, Elizabeth and Jennings (see Figure 3). The county commissioners who selected the site of the county seat—Amaziah Morgan, Jehu Perkins, and John Julian—named three of the town's streets for themselves.[22] In naming the streets they also sought to honor Governor Jonathan Jennings, who signed the enabling act creating the county, and Noah Noble, sheriff of Franklin County and a political "comer" who became governor in 1831.[23] Ruth and Elizabeth streets were named after two of the ten daughters of William B. Laughlin. In the early 1880s, the city council gave the east-west streets, Noble, Ruth, Elizabeth, and Jennings, numbers for the sake of convenience. The original plat lots begin at number 1 at the southwest corner of Main and Water streets and run to lot number 151 in the southeast corner of the plat fronting on the Big Flat Rock River (see Figure 3).[24]

Despite its importance as a county seat, growth of the town did not occur rapidly in its early years. As town settlers carved streets from the forest and cleared town lots, they erected the first log houses on the streets surrounding the public square and up and down Main Street for a block each way.[25] Often these log houses served as temporary public buildings until permanent structures could be built. Local cabins, for example, served for years as the meeting place of the circuit court during its regular terms. The practice continued until 1826, when a two-story brick

[19] Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:201-3.

[20] *Ibid.*, 1:199, 351; Mary Poe Wilson, "Dr. William Beattie Laughlin," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History, 1822-1972* (Shelbyville, Ind., n.d.), p. 87.

[21] Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:208-9, 266.

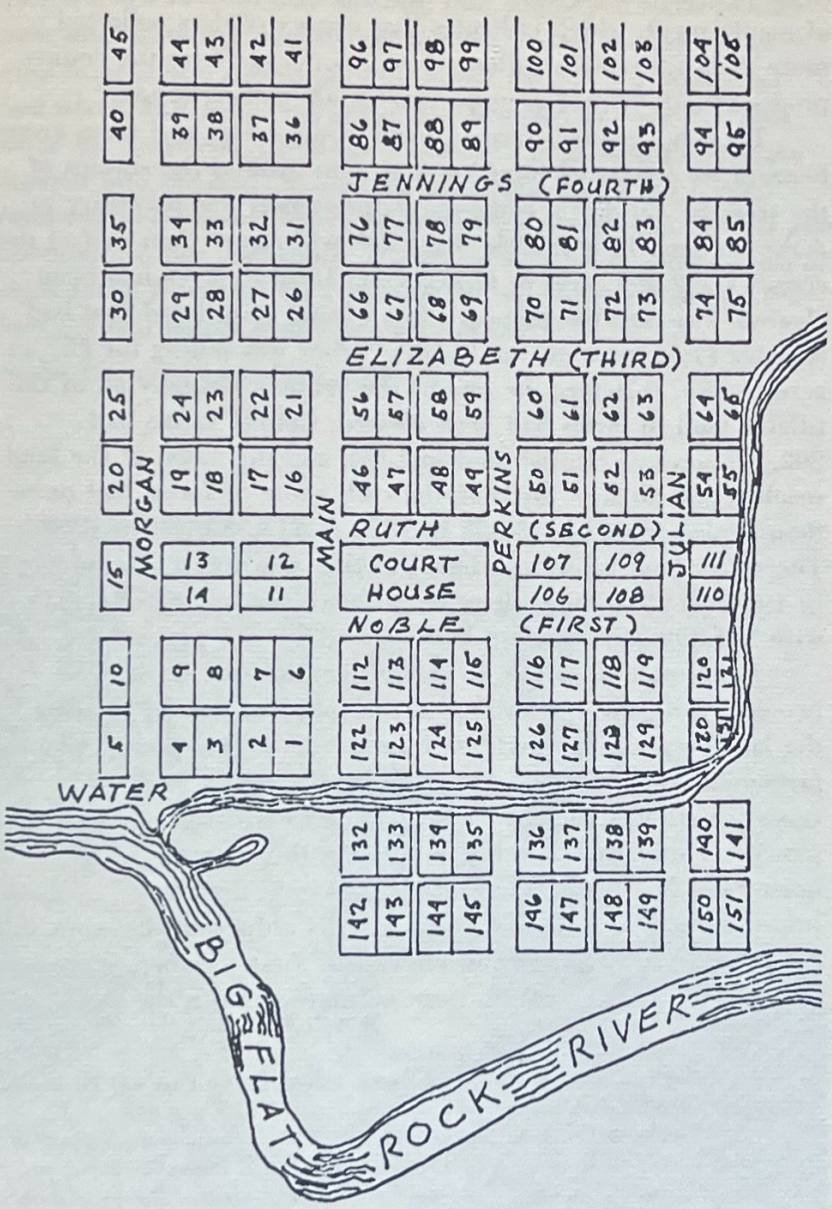
[22] *Ibid.*, 1:260-61.

[23] *Ibid.*, 1:261.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ibid.*, 1:268.

Figure 3. Original Plat of Rushville



Source: Based on a 1908 map of Rushville prepared by E. B. Thomas

courthouse forty feet square was built.[26] Other houses functioned as temporary churches for the circuit riding preachers and still others as taverns or stores as well as dwellings.

The strictly agricultural nature of the surrounding country did not attract manufacturers and artisans. A village blacksmith, wagon maker, cabinet maker, and shoemaker were about the only trades needed in addition to miller and tanner. Before the building of the Laughlin grist mill in 1821, settlers had to travel to Connersville in Fayette County to grind their corn. Along with the grist mill came the distillery, usually an old-fashioned copper still. Jehu Perkins erected one in Rushville in 1821 along with a horsepower grist mill. Hand-in-hand with the still came the tavern. Quite early William Hart put up a two-story log house and opened the first tavern in it. The town got its second tavern when Reu Pugh put up a pretentious log house that he used as a tavern and a general store. This same Pugh also opened the first tannery.[27]

Other early settled places founded in the county centered around similar services needed by an agricultural community. Milroy, platted in 1830, centered around a tavern and a general store; New Salem, laid out in 1831, had as its nucleus a blacksmith shop and wagon shop; Arlington, platted in 1832, centered around a store, a carding mill, and a grist mill; Vienna, later called Glenwood and platted in 1832, focused on a tavern; Carthage, laid out in 1834, had as its nucleus a general store as did Wilmington, later called Manilla, platted in 1836. Some, such as Moscow, laid out in 1830, performed more unusual functions. In addition to the usual grist mill, store, distillery, and tavern that formed its nucleus, Moscow served as a rendezvous point for

[26] *Ibid.*, 1:115.

[27] *History of Rush County*, p. 339; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:263, 267-68.

an organized band of horsethieves operating in the area. They met there to distribute their plunder.[28]

Lacking coal and iron as natural resources that might have stimulated industrial growth, the rich soil made agriculture the county's leading economic enterprise from the beginning. For one hundred dollars a pioneer could get eighty acres of rich fertile soil and in the decade of the 1820s the search for cheap land brought settlers into the county by the thousands. The trickle of early settlers had turned into a wave and by 1830 the county's population reached 9,707, including 107 free blacks from the South. A change in the land law in 1832 reduced the minimum purchase to forty acres while keeping the terms at $1.25 an acre paid in cash. Thereafter a settler could obtain a forty acre wooded homestead site for $50. By 1837 virtually all of the county's 250,000 acres available for sale from the national government had been sold. The wave had turned into a tide and by 1840 the population reached 16,456. The 409 square miles of Rush County that had once supported probably not many more than ten Indian hunters, since it was estimated each hunter needed forty square miles, now supported 3,345 farmers. Most of these were farming homesteads of eighty acres or less.[29]

From the beginning the small farmer was the backbone of the county and the work of clearing the land was the greatest task he confronted. With an ax and his own strength to fell the trees, and a team of oxen or horses to move the trunks and remove the stumps, he stripped the land of its great climax forest with amazing speed. One indication of the speed is the fact that in 1840 the county produced only $34 in animal skins and furs.[30] The once plentiful wild animals that found their home in the forest were gone. Another indication was the decline in maple sugar production. In 1840 the county produced 414,155 pounds of maple sugar, which indicates that county settlers collected more than 1.8 million gallons of sap. A decade later the county produced only 59,011 pounds, or 258,000 gallons of sap.[31]

Though a pioneer farmer could girdle a tree and plant crops beneath its defoliated branches and plow around the stumps of the trees he cut down, complete deforestation was necessary to make the land fully tillable. By 1850, with more than half of the county's 242,000 acres in farms, some 126,449 acres had been cleared. This was the pioneer's first capital gain. Land that had sold for $1.25 an acre two decades earlier was selling for $57 an acre in 1857.[32] Before the end of the century virtually all of the tillable land in farms had been cleared. County farms had 202,752 acres of cleared land in 1890, and the value of the land reached $80 an acre. By then the cash value of farms had more than tripled from $4,323,533 in 1850 to $13,552,100 in 1890. Thereafter land values continued to rise, reaching $125 an acre in 1904; by 1910 the cash value of farms reached $27,814,835, with 221,899 acres of farm land cleared.[33]

For almost all of the nineteenth century the work of bringing forth the fruitfulness of the soil, like that of clearing the land, depended heavily on human and animal power. County farmers in 1850 still had 112 oxen for the heavy work of removing stumps, but the main source of animal power for plowing, cultivating, and harvesting was the county's 7,518 horses and 264 mules. Over the next several decades improvements in farm machinery greatly enhanced the work that could be done by horses and mules and their numbers increased appreciably. In 1890, there were no more oxen in the county,

[28]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:221-22, 230-32, 236, 241, 247, 250.

[29]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifth Census* (1830), pp. 144-45; *Sixth Census* (1840), *Compendium*, p. 82.

[30]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixth Census* (1840), *Compendium*, p. 290.

[31]*Ibid.*, p. 288; *Seventh Census* (1850), p. 796.

[32]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census* (1850), p. 791; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:77.

[33]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census* (1890), *Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture*, p. 207; *Thirteenth Census* (1910), VI, *Agriculture: Reports by States*, pp. 480-81; *Seventh Census* (1850), p. 791; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:77.

"We had maple trees in the woods south of the house. In March when the sap was flowing, Dad would put spiles in the trees and hang sap buckets under them. It was the job for us girls to help him gather the sap. When we thought the bucket was about half full, Dad would put two barrels on a sled and drive the horse down into the woods. We girls would empty the buckets into the barrels, and the horse would pull the barrels back to the barnyard where Mom had a fire ready to boil the sap all day in a big iron kettle. We would only get a quart or two of thick syrup from the day's trouble, but my, it was worth it! We had the best maple candy you ever tasted."

Stella Carson Carmichael, Raleigh

Maple sugar was a natural pioneer sweetner readily harvested from the county's numerous sugar maple trees. Pioneers learned its value and the technique for collecting the sap from the Indians. This was done by boring a half-inch hole in the trunk of the tree to a depth of about two inches and then inserting a wooden spout. The sap then flowed into a bucket and was collected daily. Sap gathering usually extended from late February through April when the sunny days and cold, dry nights stimulated its flow. A single maple tree might yield from ten to twenty-five gallons of sap, and it took approximately thirty-five gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup. One gallon of syrup produced about eight pounds of maple sugar.

but the numbers of horses and mules increased to 11,645 and 398, respectively. Thereafter, although improvements continued to be made in farm machinery, the number of horses did not significantly increase—but the number of mules did. In 1910, the county had 11,898 horses and 902 mules.[34]

The county's pioneer farmers used simple agricultural implements. Indeed, as one farmer recently put it, "Most of the early farm implements were made of wood; only the hand tools were steel and they were made in the East. A man living in Biblical times could have settled in Rush County and have been a farmer and fed his family."[35] Wooden plows with metal shares and perhaps here and there a Jethro Wood cast-iron plow were used to break the ground and prepare the seedbed. Most corn was planted by hand and covered with a hoe. Small grains were sown broadcast in the field and worked in with a brush drag or a crude "A" harrow. Corn was harvested by hand while reap hooks, scythes, and cradles were used in harvesting small grains. "A single hand could prepare the ground, plant and attend to and gather from 20 to 25 acres [of corn], according to the state of the ground and character of the season."[36] Hogs simply ran wild in the woods and fed upon mast, receiving little or no attention until fall when they were fed corn for six or eight weeks prior to slaughter or marketing.

Given the relatively crude state of pioneer agriculture county farmers were very productive, which doubtless speaks highly for both their industry and the fertility of the soil. Although, as has been said, "About anything that will grow has been raised here at least once,"[37] by 1840 corn, wheat, and oats had become the leading field crops, and hogs the most important source of cash income. In that year, the earliest for which census figures are available for agricultural production, county farmers produced 1,156,707 bushels of Indian corn, 99,712 bushels of wheat, 224,064 bushels of oats, and 48,458 hogs. Frontier methods of planting, cultivation, and harvesting were still prevalent at mid-century, but by then the county had a total of $151,104 invested in farm implements and machinery. These may have included a few reapers patented by John McCormick in 1834 and steel plows patented by John Deere in 1837, but with an average of little more than $50 per farm invested in farm implements and machinery most farmers doubtless still depended heavily on pioneer methods and equipment. Field crop production in 1850 showed a marked increase in corn and wheat, being 1,685,994 and 133,473 bushels, respectively; oats, which were considered by farmers as a "side" crop, declined to 64,203 bushels. Since the corn grown was fed almost exclusively to hogs, there was a comparable increase in hog production to 64,294.[38]

During the next several decades agricultural inventiveness made available many new farm implements and machines, although in newly cleared land stumps made their use difficult or impossible. The chilled-iron plow, the seed drill, the Marsh reaper, mowers and combined reapers and mowers, steam threshers, the twine binder, the spring tooth harrow, the cultivator, the corn planter, and innumerable other horse drawn machines aided the farmer by lessening the demands on his energy and increasing his productivity.[39] When and how many of these new machines found their way on to county farms is not known. What is known is that the State Board of Agriculture

[34]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census* (1850), p. 791; *Eleventh Census* (1890), *Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture*, p. 326; *Thirteenth Census* (1910), VI, *Agriculture: Reports by States*, pp. 480-81.

[35]Marion Liggett and Lawrence Porter, "Rush County Agriculture," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History*, p. 36.

[36]*The Indiana Gazetteer, or Topographical Dictionary of the State of Indiana* (Third edition, Indianapolis, 1850), pp. 35-36.

[37]Liggett and Porter, "Rush County Agriculture," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History*, p. 35.

[38]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixth Census* (1840), *Compendium*, pp. 287-88; *Seventh Census* (1850), pp. 791-92.

[39]Latta, *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture*, pp. 78-83.

asserted in 1876 that "the polished steel plow, the seed drill, the corn planter, the cultivator, and the harvester are found on almost every farm, and each autumn the threshing machine with its portable steam, or horse power makes its rounds of the neighborhood, and prepares the harvest for market."[40]

It is also known that by 1890 the total value of farm implements and machinery in the county had increased to $251,560, with an average of more than $120 per farm. Doubtless many of the new implements were horse drawn drills and reapers and steam threshers because both oat and wheat production significantly increased. Oats were raised principally as feed for horses, seldom for market and never for human consumption, and increased to 240,986 bushels in 1890. Wheat production rose to 716,109 bushels in the same year. Wheat yields varied from as little as five bushels to as much as forty-eight bushels an acre, with about seventeen bushels considered a good harvest. Corn and hog production, on the other hand, did not show a significant change over 1850. In 1890 the county produced 1,707,499 bushels of corn, fed largely to 70,613 hogs.[41] Mechanization, therefore, appears to have had less impact on the production of corn than wheat during the first stages of the mechanization of agriculture in the county.

This does not hold true for the improvements in farm implements and machinery made during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. These included the riding gang plow, disk plow, manure spreader, fertilizer drill, two-row corn cultivator, corn binder, and corn picker.[42] After almost half a century of being on an agricultural plateau, corn and hog production rose sharply. The horse drawn

[40]Quotation in Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis, 1965), p. 377.

[41]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census* (1890), *Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture*, pp. 207, 326, 364; Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, p. 379.

[42]Latta, *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture*, pp. 106-9, 114, 128-29, 372; Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, 1968), p. 139.

A five horse hitch, 1936.

corn planter, in general use by 1880, had more than doubled the two or three acres a man could plant by hand, but it had not appreciably influenced corn production.[43] When it was joined by the new machinery developed after 1890, corn and hogs became the paramount products of county agriculture. This is not to say that they had not always been important; Rush County led the state in hog production between 1850 and 1880.[44] What it does say is that in the county's transformation from self-sufficient to commercial agriculture and from farming as a means of subsistence to agriculture as a business, corn and hog production became the county's specialty. Between 1890 and 1910, while wheat production remained relatively constant with 732,545 bushels produced and that of oats actually declined to 137,437 bushels, corn production in 1910 reached 4,268,526 bushels. Though there is not a direct correlation between corn production and hog production, the number of hogs raised in the county—122,071 in 1910—showed an equally spectacular rise.[45] By then commercial agriculture was firmly established in the county and specialization in corn and hog production had become its business.

The transformation of county agriculture did not depend alone on the improvement of farm implements and machinery. Other factors played an important role, not the least of which was improvement in transportation. The wilderness isolation of Rush County that first made the land so cheap also made contact with the developed areas of the nation difficult. Since there were no principal roads in the central part of the state in the county's early years, the first roads to and through the county were merely blazed trails. The earliest cleared road ran diagonally across the county from southeast to northwest. This was the Brookville Road that ran from Indianapolis to Cincinnati through

[43]Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, p. 378.
[44]*Ibid.*, p. 381.
[45]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census* (1910), VI, *Agriculture: Reports by States*, pp. 480-81, 498-99.

Modern gatherings of threshers recall earlier times.

Rushville. As early as 1831, a stage line provided service over this route making the trip to Cincinnati in two days and two nights. By the early 1840s county farmers regularly used this route to market hogs in Cincinnati.[46]

The general pattern followed in the construction of other roads within the county was to have them radiate from the county seat, like the spokes of a wagon wheel with Rushville as its hub. A similar pattern was followed for the state as a whole with Indianapolis as the hub. Despite the beginnings of plank road construction in the late 1850s, county roads remained in wretched condition for much of the century. As late as the early 1870s a "most wretched mud road" connected Rushville to Milroy, "a miserable road" linked Moscow to Rushville, and Manilla was "without a good communication with Rushville." The poor condition of county roads probably accounts for the many small communities that developed to serve a local hinterland and subsequently disappeared. Since Rushville had not encouraged the improvement of roads while some nearby communities had, Milroy was drawn into the market area of Greensburg (Decatur County), Moscow to Shelbyville (Shelby County), and Carthage to Knightstown (Henry County). A surge of road building sought to counter these developments in the late 1870s and by the 1890s good roads extended into all parts of the county.[47]

Rush County did not have to wait nearly as long to obtain a good long distance transportation route. The first railroad cars of the Rushville and Shelbyville Railroad (R & S), a lateral branch of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad (M & I), arrived in Rushville on September 10, 1850. This railroad linked Rushville directly with the important Ohio River trade. A month later another lateral branch of the road, the Shelbyville and Knightstown Railroad, reached the northwestern part of the county.[48] Still another railroad, the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Indianapolis (C H & I), completed the laying of track to Morristown, fifteen miles west of Rushville, in 1867 and trains began running daily from Cincinnati to Rushville. The following year the C H & I was completed to Indianapolis, and trips to either city that had previously taken days could now be made in hours.[49]

In 1879, the Vernon, Greensburg, and Rushville Railroad (V G & R) was incorporated to run from North Vernon to Rushville. The V G & R was built and opened to Greensburg by April, 1880, and reached Rushville September 10, 1880. In 1882, the New Castle and Rushville Railroad (N & R) was completed, and in 1889 the Cincinnati, Wabash, and Michigan Railroad (C W & M) was built north from Rushville, touching Carthage and continuing through Knightstown to Anderson, Madison County. By 1890, the Pennsylvania Railroad had absorbed the old Rushville and Shelbyville Railroad; the C H & I had become the Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Western (C I & W); the N & R was incorporated into the Lake Erie and Western (L E & W); and the C W & M and the V G & R had become part of the Big Four System. By 1910, the C I & W was operating five trains daily east from Rushville and a similar number west; the Pennsylvania dispatched two each day south and north; the Big Four operated four passenger trains, two each way; and the L E & W, though primarily a freight road, operated one each way every day.[50] Railroads had transformed the "island

[46] Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:93.

[47] *Ibid.*, 1:94-98. Small communities that thrived for varying periods and then disappeared included Savannah, platted in 1834; Ashland, 1835; Mt. Etna, 1836; Marcellus, 1836; and Carmel, 1837. *Ibid.*, 1:255-56.

[48] *American Railroad Journal*, November 23, 1850, p. 739; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:102. Except for the Carthage area, the Shelbyville and Knightstown Railroad was of little importance to the county.

[49] *History of Rush County*, p. 632; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:105-6.

[50] *History of Rush County*, p. 632; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:107; George S. Rainey, *Demise of the Iron Horse* (Berne, Ind., 1969), pp. 86-87.

community" of 1840 into an integral part of the national market system.

As a largely self-sufficient community Rush County had required a minimum of trade and manufacturing enterprises to satisfy its local needs. The United States Census in 1840 reported that the county had thirty-six persons employed in commerce and thirty-eight retail dry goods, grocery, and other stores. There were no wholesale businesses reported and no flouring mills. The county did have eighteen grist mills and seventeen saw mills, which employed thirty-five men, had a capital investment of $37,855, and produced a total value of $16,006 in products. There were four tanneries, eight distilleries, and one brewery. Six men with a capital investment of $550 produced $1,250 in carriages and wagons, and eight men with $756 in tools and equipment manufactured $2,020 worth of furniture. In all the county had 311 persons employed in manufactures and trades with $54,956 invested in capital.[51]

The census that year also reported forty-eight persons employed in the learned professions. These were no doubt largely lawyers, teachers, and ministers. Rushville, being the county seat, probably had the lion's share of lawyers, but teachers were spread throughout the county in forty-eight primary and common schools. With an average of four per township these schools provided education for 1,149 students. The census in 1840 made no report on religion, but in 1850 the county had twenty-six Methodist, eleven Baptist, twelve Christian, nine Presbyterian, and five Friends churches. In the aggregate the structures of these churches had a total value of $39,330 and accommodations for 22,300 believers.[52]

There were no banks in the county in 1840, but it did have two printing offices and two weekly newspapers. Each newspaper probably included a printing office as well since all together these services employed only a total of seven men and had a capital investment of $1,580. At least one, and perhaps both of these newspapers and printing offices were located in Rushville because in April, 1840, brothers Pleasant A. and Oliver C. Hackleman established there the Rushville *Whig*. Although the name of the paper has changed over time, it is the oldest business in continuous operation in the county. Currently it is being published under the name Rushville *Republican*.[53]

The persistence of log structures in the county into the 1840s further attests to its self-sufficient character. The rough-hewn timber jail in Rushville built in 1823, for example, remained in use until 1845 when it was replaced with a stone structure.[54] Dr. Arnold's detailed description of the pioneer log house reveals the craftsmanship required. The simple interior furnishings were equally dependent on the pioneer's skill. Bedsteads, tables, and stools were all fashioned by the pioneer with the aid of ax, saw, augur, and drawknife.[55] Settlers gradually replaced or enlarged these pioneer cabins with story-and-a-half or two-story hewn log houses as their time and economic circumstances permitted. They built these with two rooms below and one above, using planks for partitions, floors, and doors, brick and stone for fireplaces, and glass for windows. In the usual progression from wilderness homestead to mature farm, these hewn log houses would in turn be replaced with brick or wooden frame houses. The emergence of mature farms in Rush County probably began around 1840, for in addition to the seventeen saw mills, the United States Census reported thirty-five men employed in the manufacture of brick and lime. The census also reported that year the construction in the county of two brick and thirty-nine wooden frame houses.[56] At that rate of

[51]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixth Census* (1840), *Compendium*, pp. 83, 289, 293-94, 296-97.

[52]*Ibid.*, p. 83; *Seventh Census* (1850), pp. 799-806.

[53]*History of Rush County*, p. 637; A. Hartwell Coons, "Newspapers of Rush County," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History*, p. 10.

[54]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:209-10.

[55]*History of Rush County*, pp. 324-25; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:43-44.

[56]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixth Census* (1840), *Compendium*, pp. 291, 297.

construction it seems probable that many if not most of the 2,824 dwellings reported in the county in 1850 were log houses.[57]

Another point that appears to support the persistence of the self-sufficient character of the county down to 1850 is the relative smallness of the population of Rushville, the county's largest town. In 1850, it was little more than a village with a population of 742, while the county as a whole had a population of 16,445.[58] Rushville's take-off into sustained growth and the acceleration of the county's transformation from a self-sufficient to a commercial economy both appear to have begun with the coming of the Rushville and Shelbyville Railroad. From frontier times Cincinnati had been the county's prime market area. Even as late as the 1840s hog buyers were purchasing hogs in the county for delivery in the Cincinnati market, a trip that took anywhere from ten days to three weeks depending on the weather and road conditions. Teamsters also made regular trips to the Cincinnati market, taking produce and returning with merchandise.[59]

Dependence on the Cincinnati market changed with the coming of the railroad. In 1852, John Brough, president of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad declared, "At the town of Shelbyville, in Shelby county, two Railroads branch off, one through the fertile county of Rush, the other to Knightstown in Henry Co. . . . The produce of the counties of Rush, Hancock and Henry is now carried over the two roads we have mentioned to Shelbyville, thence with the produce of Shelby county, over the Shelbyville road, to Edinburg, thence to Madison." The Madison railroad not only carried out the produce of the "garden counties of the State," it also brought in trade and commerce.[60] Although the population of the county actually declined from 16,445 to 16,193 in the decade following the completion of the

[57]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census* (1850), p. 781.

[58]*Ibid.*, p. 774.

[59]Sarah Newby, "Marketing Stock," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History*, p. 4.

[60]Madison *Courier*, August 11, 1852.

The common cabin was built without plank and without nails, and the chimney without brick or lime. The cabin was constructed of round logs, notched down at the corners, so as to leave but little space between, and this was partially closed by chunks firmly driven in, and then every crevice was filled and plastered over with the daubing of tough clay; this when dry effectually excluded the air and cold. At one end the logs were cut out so as to make the fireplace. This opening was shut up by building three sides of a rectangle of split timbers, the fourth being the opening into the room; next a solid wall of tempered clay was built inside of and against the timbers; this was carried up four or five feet, constituting the fireplace; above this was the stick chimney, constructed of sticks split square, from one to one and a half inches in diameter and gradually and often gracefully contracting until it reached the proper height. As fast as the sticks were laid in position it was carefully plastered inside and out; this prevented the sticks from being ignited by the roaring, rushing column of flame, usually ascending from the burning logs in the vast fireplace. The roof was made of clapboards, usually four or five feet long; the ends of these rested on logs about three feet apart, gradually ascending like steps. The joints or openings between these boards being covered with other boards, and being kept in place by weight poles, formed a roof that would keep all dry beneath it for many a day. The floors were formed of timbers split and then hewed smooth, and being from three to four inches thick, these puncheons rested on logs, hewed on the upper side. A very strong though not a very tight floor. The doors were made of the same kind of material but thinner, and held in place by cross pieces fastened on with wooden pins. The hinges and the latch were also of wood, so that there was no iron, plank or brick found in one of these primitive residences. The window was an aperture of about eighteen inches square, sometimes closed by a piece of an old sheet or some other substitute for glass.

Dr. John Arnold

railroad, the population of Rushville almost doubled, growing to 1,434.[61]

The town experienced little actual growth during the 1860s, in part at least because of the decline of Madison, Jefferson County, and Ohio River trade. As Table 1 indicates the population of Rushville increased little by 1870 while that of the county grew by almost 1,500. During the next three decades, as the rail network centering on Rushville was completed, the town averaged net growth of nearly a thousand inhabitants per decade. Though growth was not as dramatic in the first two decades of the twentieth century, it was equally steady. Such steady growth, however, was not characteristic of the county as a whole. As Table 1 shows the county more than regained in the 1860s the population it had lost in the 1850s and continued to grow through 1880. In part, no doubt, because of the national farm problems of the late 1880s and early 1890s, county population declined during the 1880s. As good times returned to agriculture in the late 1890s, so also did the county's farm population, reaching an all time high of 20,148 in 1900.[62] A gradual decline in the next two decades put the county population in 1920 at about what it had been four decades earlier.

Dr. Arnold described Rushville in 1878 as it began to experience its most dramatic period of growth:[63]

> Last year there were some twenty-five houses built. This year the number will reach thirty, among these, three fine brick business houses and a number of handsome residences. Its graded school is a first-class one . . . . Rushville has nine physicians and seventeen attorneys. It has six dry goods stores, seven grocery and provision stores, three boot and shoe stores, three butcher shops, two jewelry stores, two furniture stores, four drug stores, six saloons, three restaurants, five millinery establishments, two lumber merchants, one book store, two hardware and agricultural implement stores, four livery stables, two

[61]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census* (1870), *Compendium*, pp. 42, 174.

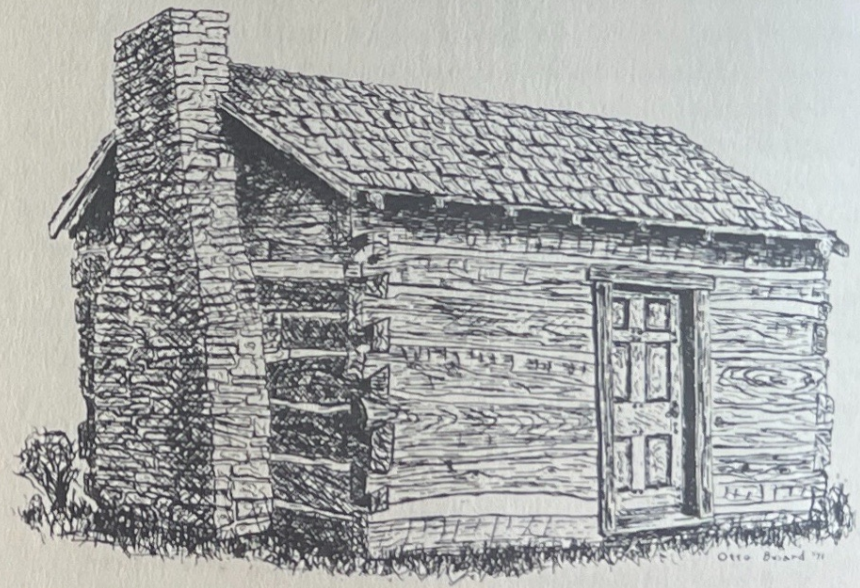
[62]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census* (1890), *Report on Population*, Pt. 1, p. 125; *Twelfth Census* (1900), *Population*, Pt. 1, p. 142. For a brief discussion of the depressed agricultural conditions, see Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, pp. 30-31.

[63]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:271-72.

Table 1. Rushville and Rush County Population, 1850-1920

Year	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
Rushville	742	1,434	1,696	2,515	3,475	4,541	4,925	5,498
Rush County	16,445	16,193	17,626	19,238	19,034	20,148	19,349	19,241

Source: U.S. Census of Population



Arnold's Post Office, ca. 1821, by Otto Busard

hotels, three planing mills, two gristmills, two newspapers, one furniture factory, four saddlery and harness makers, one sawmill, three stove and tin shops, one paint shop, two carriage shops, three blacksmith shops and a large number of mechanics of all kinds.

Dr. Arnold might also have mentioned that Rushville in 1878 had two banks. One had been founded in 1857 as the Rushville branch of the Indiana State Bank. It became a national bank in 1865, taking the name Rushville National Bank. The other, the Rush County Bank, also began in the 1850s as a private bank and in 1871 became the Rush County National Bank. The town continued to have two banks until 1891 when the Farmers Trust Company was established. A fourth bank was added in 1900 with the formation of the Peoples Bank. In addition to the banks in Rushville, banks were founded in Carthage in 1876, Manilla in 1895, Milroy in 1904, Arlington in 1905, Mays and Glenwood in 1907, Falmouth in 1910, and New Salem in 1917.[64] The expansion of banks and banking reflected the decline in subsistence agriculture and the growth of commercial agriculture and farming as a business. The self-sufficient pioneer farmer had little need for money and credit; the modern farmer was always in need of operating money for seed, fertilizers, tools, expansion, and a myriad of other needs.

While this transformation of agriculture was taking place, Rushville was undergoing a transformation from town to city. As late as September, 1869, when the population of Rushville approached almost 1,700 people, the local newspaper published a vehement protest against the presence of geese, chickens, and hogs in the streets and against the muddy conditions of streets and the poor quality of crossings. The lack of urban amenities began to disappear as population increased. Soon after Alexander Graham Bell made his famous demonstration at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876, Charles H. Bailey built the first telephone exchange in Rushville. The exchange provided local service in Rushville and connected the town with Carthage. Bailey eventually sold out to the Bell System that operated the exchange until 1892. Then in a dispute over rates, local residents established the Co-operative Telephone Company to provide service to Rushville and the rest of the county.[65] An electric light plant was built in 1889 and was expanded to include a water plant in 1895. The city bought both of these facilities in 1896, thereafter providing municipally owned electricity and water to its subscribers. Rushville got its first gas for lighting purposes from an artificial gas plant built in 1878. In the early 1890s this plant was replaced with natural gas service which by 1920 almost completely replaced coal and wood as a source of fuel.[66]

The transformation from town to city also increased the need for police and fire protection. In 1881 the city constructed a special building to house the police and fire departments and provide meeting space for the city council and the mayor's court. Prior to that time the town had relied on a volunteer fire department made up of the leading men of the town. Now the department became professional and the city added a steamer to the hook and ladder truck and hand pumper used by the volunteers. By 1920 the city had a paid fire department made up of five men equipped with a steamer, a motor truck and chemical engine, and a reserve hose wagon. The police force by then included a chief, a patrolman, and a night watchman.[67]

The shift from town to city was also marked by the expansion of manufacturing. In the summer of 1877 a Rushville newspaper declared that "this is not in any sense a manufacturing town."[68] Innis, Pearce and Company, founded in 1884, was the first non-agricultural manufacturer of any consequence to begin operation in Rushville. The factory began

[64]*Ibid.*, 1:269, 296, 300-9; *History of Rush County*, pp. 639-43, 656-57. For a more detailed discussion of banking in the county, see Chapter 7.

[65]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:270, 281-82.

[66]*History of Rush County*, pp. 633-34; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:269, 284-85.

[67]*History of Rush County*, p. 633; Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:269-70.

[68]Quotation in Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 1:282.

as a planing mill but quickly expanded into the manufacture of furniture. The firm's reputation for high quality created such a demand its founders abandoned the planing mill and devoted the factory's entire capacity to the building of furniture.[69] In 1890 the United States Census of Manufactures reported seventy-five manufacturing establishments in the county employing on average 448 workers with a total of $453,480 invested in plants and equipment.[70] A decade later Rushville alone had ninety-one firms that employed an average of 405 workers and had $531,736 worth of capital investment. By 1900 Rushville ranked fiftieth among all urban centers in the state in the value of products produced.[71]

In the first two decades of the twentieth century the city's principal industry became more and more the manufacture of furniture and furniture related products. In addition to the Innis, Pearce Company, Rushville became the home of Park Furniture (1901), the Chas. E. Francis Company (1907), and Rushville Furniture (1911). By 1919 the number of manufacturing establishments in the county had declined to forty-four, and furniture manufacture in Rushville had become the county's leading non-agricultural industry. The county had begun to build an industrial base to compliment its predominantly agricultural economy, but it still remained heavily dependent on agriculture. In that year, while the total value of products produced by manufacturing in the county amounted to $3,425,627, the value of field crops reached $8,821,660 and the value of hogs came to $1,879,245.[72] Despite growth in manufacturing, farm products still amounted to more than three times the value of manufactured products.

Rush County had come a long way in its first hundred years, from a frontier wilderness to a mature agricultural area. Its lush fields and numerous well kept farms all spoke of the values that had helped build them and of the virtues of the rural way of life. There were changes to be sure. A farmer depended more on machines and on others than ever before, but he could still repair the machines himself—or make do without them if necessary. He depended more and more on the banker and the grocer, but they were still his friends and neighbors. Many town residents, like Cyrus Mull, had spent their early years on the land and understood and respected agricultural endeavors.[73] Urbanism was on the rise, but the farmer had little fear that the derisive epithets "rube" and "hayseed" would be directed at him. In short, his world had changed, but he could still recognize it and feel comfortable in it.

[69]Rushville *Daily Republican*, October 20, 1920. The *Daily Republican* became the *Republican* on February 10, 1930; for ease of notation the paper will be cited as *Republican* hereafter.

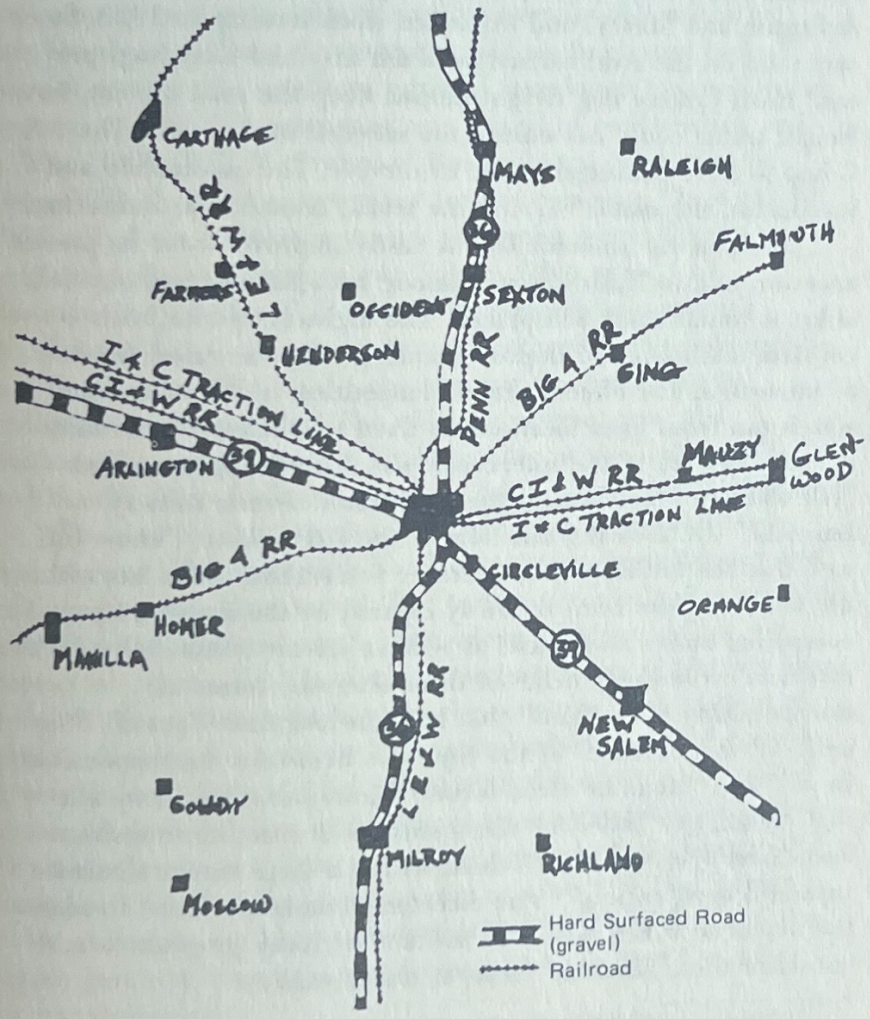
[70]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census* (1890), *Report on Manufacturing*, Pt. 1, p. 406.

[71]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census* (1900), *Abstract*, p. 376, *Manufactures*, Pt. 2, *States and Territories*, Table 5, p. 205.

[72]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), IX, *Manufactures: Reports for States*, p. 375, VI, Pt. 1, *Agriculture: Reports for States*, pp. 348-49, 358. For a more detailed discussion of the furniture business, see Chapter 7.

[73]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 2:401.

Figure 4. Main Transportation Routes in Rush County, ca. 1920



Source: Based on *Highway Map and Guide of Indiana* (Aurora, Missouri: Mid-West Map Company, n.d.)

Chapter 2

Break With The Past

Rush County residents led a much more isolated life in 1920 then they did even a few years later. They learned about the outside world largely from newspapers, as they had in the nineteenth century; regular radio broadcasting did not begin until the 1920s and commercial television did not become a reality until after World War II. For many residents the poor condition of roads similarly restricted contact with much beyond their immediate worlds. Four railroads did link the county with the outside, but the major form of long distance public transportation was the interurban that ran fifty-eight miles from Connersville through Rushville to Indianapolis (see Figure 4).[1] Despite its importance as a link to the world outside of Rush County, travel on the interurban for many remained limited to special occasions. One county resident could still vividly recall half a century later her trip to Indianapolis in 1929 to attend business college. "I can remember," Irene Richardson later related, "[my parents] put me on the Interurban from Rushville to Indianapolis, I'd never been in Indianapolis, and when I got off of that streetcar in Indianapolis and looked around and there was no one to meet me, . . . I thought the world had come to an end."[2] Indianapolis was such a far off and strange place to this high school graduate that it "terrified" her.

The building of the interurban line that carried Irene Richardson to Indianapolis began in 1903 with the incorporation of the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Company, known as

[1]Typescript in Rushville Public Library of Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Company, "Extension of Road . . . ," 1922, p. 5 (hereafter "I & C Extension"); A. L. Gary and E. B. Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County, Indiana* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1921), 1:107.

[2]Typescript of interview with Irene Tatlock Richardson, March 11, 1979, p. 13, in Rushville Public Library.

the I & C Traction Line. The president of the company was Charles L. Henry, the father of the interurban in Indiana. It was Henry who coined the term "interurban," which meant a railway having less than half its track within municipal limits.[3] In July, 1904, the first spike marking the beginning of construction was driven on the corner of Third and Julian streets in Rushville. Within a year the line was completed to Indianapolis, and the first car ran over the length of the line. The following summer the line was completed from Rushville to Connersville, furnishing both freight and passenger service between Connersville and Indianapolis. In the same year plans were made to extend the road to Cincinnati, Ohio, but it was not until June, 1914, that a detailed report on the proposed extension was made. The road failed to fulfill the promise of its name because the total cost of the extension exceeded four million dollars and financing could never be arranged.[4]

The I & C (later the Indianapolis and Southeastern) was an important asset for Rushville and the county, not only because it provided good transportation but also because it contributed to the economic well being of both. The company operated a 3,000 kilowatt powerhouse on Julian Street in Rushville that supplied current for the entire system. A cross-country line from Rushville to Shelbyville supplied power for the division that ran from Indianapolis to Greensburg. In addition, the car shops and general offices of the company were in Rushville. More than fifty residents obtained their pay from the company; in all, more than 300 persons in whole or in part depended on the company for livelihood. The traction company also paid considerable taxes in Rushville and the county.[5]

Traffic on the line reached its peak in 1923 when the road logged more than a million and a half total miles. Passenger miles had crested some six years earlier, but freight mileage, which did not peak until 1924, made up for the decline. In 1920 the road carried 156,000 freight miles, but by 1924 that had increased to over 292,000 miles. The traction line built hog pens in Rushville and at other points along the line, including Arlington and Mauzy, and expanded stock hauling in 1920. Stock cars used on the road carried between fifty and sixty hogs per car.[6] Rush County hog freight helped keep the road solvent, but freight traffic could not ensure the survival of the road. The I & C had to have passenger traffic to survive. The automobile and its cousins, the motor bus and the truck, doomed the interurban.

The postwar automobile was vastly improved over its prewar ancestor, and in Rush County, among both farmers and city folk alike, it found ready acceptance. The highway system, with constant additions and improvements, greatly increased freedom of movement and offered direct competition to the interurban, which ran from fixed locations on fixed schedules. By the mid-twenties the era of the interurban was fast coming to an end. "All who are familiar with the interurban electric railway business," declared the directors of the I & C Line, "know full well that the ordinary short distance interurban traffic has within the last few years been seriously injured by the increased use of competing busses and trucks as well as private automobiles." The directors erroneously believed these alternate forms of transportation to be "fads" that had reached their "peak." They believed this because "of the injury to highways, uncompensated in any way," done by these forms of transportation. They felt that "legislative bodies of the country will enact more restrictive and controlling legislation which will to a large extent eliminate injurious competition."[7] The directors completely failed to realize the extent to which state and national highway programs would subsidize these alternate forms of transportation.

[3]Jerry Marlette, *Electric Railroads of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1959), pp. 5, 81-82.

[4]Will M. Frazee, "History [of] Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Co.," August 10, 1943, bound with "I & C Extension."

[5]"I & C Extension," p. 7; Rushville *Republican*, October 8, 1931.

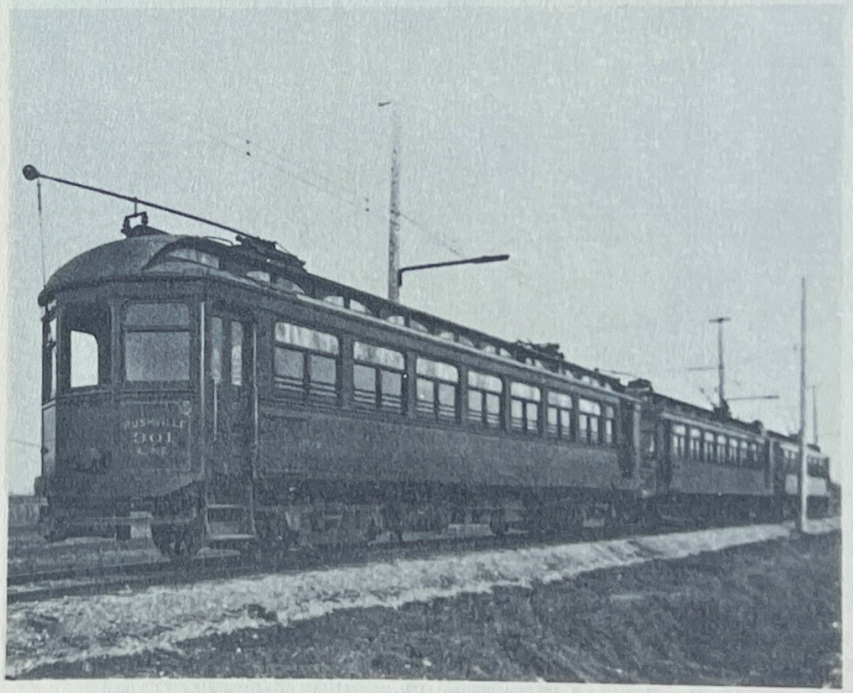
[6]"I & C Extension," Table III, Addenda, p. 6; Rushville *Republican*, March 19, 1920.

[7]"I & C Extension," pp. 12-13.

The company continued to experience financial difficulties, with combined freight and passenger mileage declining by 150,000 between 1923 and 1925. The directors reduced fares in 1925 to two cents a mile and offered dollar excursions every Sunday. Traffic did not appreciably increase, and in June, 1926, the company was given ninety days to meet its obligations or face foreclosure. Since the company had no funds and had no hope of getting any, creditors initiated foreclosure proceedings in December, 1926. The company was placed in receivership, and in May, 1927, Will M. Frazee of Rushville was confirmed by Judge Will M. Sparks as receiver for the company. On April 30, 1928, all of the traction company properties were sold at a receiver's sale by Frazee to two Toledo, Ohio, men, L. E. Eastman and Charles T. Dehore. The partners subsequently divided the I & C property into two companies—the Indianapolis and Southeastern Railroad Company and the Southeastern Indiana Power Company. The official change-over of the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Line to the Indianapolis and Southeastern Railroad Company took place July 27, 1928.[8]

The new owners purchased thirteen new lightweight one-man cars to help rejuvenate the line by increasing efficiency and encouraging passenger travel. The twelve two-man yellow traction cars that had operated on the line, along with the old big red motor car, were sold. The various rainbow colors of the new cars reflected the enthusiastic hope of the company. The exterior of the car bearing the number 255 carried a body color of Karnak green (a deep shade of Nile green) with the upper part a pastel cream. A dark red line with white stars superimposed separated the green lower part from the cream upper part. A green roof completed the exterior. Another car, number 260, had a body color of barkentine blue (a deep shade of powder blue) and the upper part was done in a pastel cream. A dark blue line with

[8]*Ibid.*, Addenda, p. 6; Rushville *Republican*, June 16, 1926; Frazee, "History [of] Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Co."; Rushville *Republican*, July 27, 1928. Marlette, *Electric Railroads of Indiana*, pp. 81-82, indicates the sale took place April 10.



Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Company cars.

After discontinuing electric interurban service, the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction Company had the bus franchise for towns formerly served, including Rushville, Shelbyville, and Greensburg. Photograph dated early 1930s.

white stars separated the blue from the cream. This car had the roof painted in a harmonizing blue.

The interior decor differed in the cars as well. Car 255 was predominately green inside, with a great deal of hand painted trim. Car 260 was frescoed and stenciled inside in delicate brown and pink tints. Dome lights and projecting side lamps were light yellow in both and intricately decorated. One of the innovations in the interurban cars was upholstered seats. The material used was called frieze, which was an Irish linen tapestry, beautifully brocaded in greens, tans, and orange. The sides and backs of the seats were gray and green interwoven wicker. There were six individual swivel chairs in the front of the cars and thirty-four double seats in the remainder, seating forty persons, two more than the old two-man cars. A new feature on the cars was a beacon light, about twenty-four inches in diameter, on the back. In the center was a stop and go signal that worked automatically with the application of the cars' brakes. Above and below the stop and go lights, arranged in a circle, were the words "Southeastern Lines" in black and yellow on a red background. These lights were added especially for the benefit of motorists following the cars in heavy city traffic, to allow them to know when the operator in the car was applying the brakes so that they would be forewarned of a stop. Another improvement was the placing of the car horns on the front instead of on the roof, which eliminated vibrational noise.[9]

With establishment of the Southeastern Line, the link between Indianapolis and Cincinnati through Rushville and Connersville was finally completed. At Connersville motor coaches completed the interurban passenger travel to Cincinnati.[10] Motor coaches, new rolling stock, excursions and drastic price cuts on livestock shipping rates, however, could not stem the declining fortunes of the road, a situation made worse by the Depression. In October, 1931, Southeastern filed a

[9]Rushville *Republican*, February 13, August 22, 1929.
[10]*Ibid.*, June 5, 1929.

petition with the Public Service Commission (PSC) asking for authority to abandon operation of both its lines since they constantly operated at a loss. The petition declared that despite numerous improvements to the property, the company had earned only $2,300 in 1930, which did not include depreciation and interest. So far, in 1931, the company had lost money. In September alone the line carried 2,000 fewer passengers than in the same month of 1930. Gross revenues declined from $485,610 in 1928 to an estimated revenue of $246,552 for 1931. In the same period, average monthly gross earnings fell from $40,470 in 1928 to $21,255 for the first ten months of 1931.[11]

The PSC granted the petition of the Indianapolis and Southeastern to abandon operations effective at midnight, December 31, 1931. Without any formality and without any of the customary last-run festivities, the midnight car from Connersville made the final run of the line through a rain swept New Year's Eve. In April, 1932, the steel track was taken up and sold for scrap; overhead trolley wire was sold for copper; and ties from the right-of-way were sold to township trustees for building purposes. Southeastern continued bus service between Rushville and Indianapolis, but the era of the interurban was over.[12]

The automobile, which contributed significantly to the decline of the interurban, first appeared in Rush County around 1900. The earliest automobiles were probably a National Electric, made in Indianapolis, and a White Steamer. These cars proved impractical and were soon replaced by automobiles powered by internal combustion engines. By 1918, when the first traffic ordinance was passed in Rushville, the automobile had become an accepted feature of country and city life. When the county assessor completed his survey of personal property in the county in 1922, he reported about 2,000 automobiles with an assessed value of over $580,000. The number of automobiles reported by the assessor rose to 3,258 (with an assessed value of $921,325) in 1927 and reached 4,500 by 1929. Although many different makes were owned in the county the most familiar car was the Model T Ford, with its three foot pedals (high and low speeds, reverse, and brake), its planetary gears, and its sturdy ugliness. Ford prices ranged in 1924 from $265 for a Runabout ($85 extra for demountable rims and starter) to $685 for a Fordor Sedan. Of course, all prices were f.o.b. Detroit.[13]

The considerable growth in the number of automobiles in use in the 1920s may in part have been a response to the improvement of county roads. Before that time the poor condition of county roads in particular, and roads in the rest of the state in general, limited the use of the automobile for extended trips. A *Highway Map and Guide of Indiana* published around 1920 indicated no paved roads in the county, and only State Routes 3 and 6 had gravel surfaces.[14] (See Figure 4.) This probably helps to explain the success of the interurban to 1923 and its decline thereafter as road surfaces improved. The instructions in the official Automobile Blue Book for 1921 on what to take along while touring suggest what travel over unimproved roads involved: "A most important item is the tow line—either hempen rope, chain or steel wire cable. . . . Tire chains should always be carried; likewise some single chains or mud hooks . . . a shovel with collapsible handle and a good camp axe . . . ."[15] What unimproved rural roads were like in wet weather is almost impossible to imagine today.

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[11]*Ibid.*, May 13, 1929, October 8, November 12, 1931.

[12]*Ibid.*, November 21, 1931, January 1, 1932; Frazee, "History [of] Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Co."; Rushville *Republican*, December 12, 1931; Marlette, *Electric Railroads of Indiana*, p. 86; Rush County File, Federal Writers Project (WPA), Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute.

[13]Rushville *Republican*, August 30, 1940; City of Rushville, Traffic Ordinance, No. 312, enacted September 3, 1918; Rushville *Republican*, May 20, 1922, May 20, 1927, June 24, 1929; Milroy *Press*, October 24, 1924.

[14]*Highway Map and Guide of Indiana* (The Mid-West Map Company, Aurora, Mo., n.d.), copy in Rushville Public Library.

[15]Reprinted in Agnes Rogers, *I Remember Distinctly* (New York, 1947), pp. 12-13.

Most county roads in 1920 were either unimproved or gravel. Road building until then had been the responsibility of townships. Up until that time under the state's three-mile road law, county commissioners could not recognize any petitions for new road construction "when the township in which they are to be built has no funds available for the purpose." Those funds were limited to 4 percent of total taxables in the township. New state laws passed in 1919 allowed counties to obtain additional funds for road building from state automobile license fees and bond issues. Under the new provisions the county received $1,055 in license fee monies from the state, and made one of its first major road improvements with a $72,670 bond issue.[16]

With this bond issue the county built a new three-mile long, gravel road, extending straight from Milroy to Rushville rather than following the winding route of the older road. The twisting of old roads was usually an intentional aspect of the pre-automobile era. Horses (and humans, too) found "the longest way 'round the sweetest way home" because it eliminated hills. The automobile made straight roads not only practical but desirable. The new road did not cross the railroad tracks in Milroy but paralleled them until the road neared Rushville (see Figure 4). The Crane Road, as the new road was called, was constructed of fine crushed stone over a well prepared roadbed and was completed in 1921.[17]

County residents favored gravel roads over cement or asphalt roads because they were both less expensive to construct and generally served farmers' needs adequately. The problem with gravel roads, however, was that they had to be continually cared for in order to keep them usable. Side ditches filled up in time unless they were scraped out. Ruts and holes developed from weather and use unless regularly dragged and repaired with loose stone. The road drag not only filled up ruts and holes and kept the material on the road from washing away, but it likewise rounded up the surface and made the drainage good, preventing water from standing on the road. Thus, even when new roads were built, maintenance and upkeep remained a problem. In the rainy seasons many of the county's principal roads were next to impassable and were as bad as some of the back roads.[18]

The Federal Highway Act of 1921 provided federal aid to the states, through fifty-fifty matching grants, for building a connected interstate system of highways. Under the act the national government appropriated $75,000,000 for 1922 alone. The law also provided for compulsory maintenance of all roads built from funds provided by the national government to state governments. The new law laid a heavy penalty on failure to maintain those roads constructed with federal aid. The act defined "maintenance" in its broadest sense as "the constant making of needed repairs to preserve a smooth-surfaced highway." The act also marked the beginning of a designated state highway system.[19]

One of the first roads in the county to come under the terms of the Federal Highway Act was the road from Rushville to Connersville through Glenwood. In 1924, after a prolonged struggle to have the road included, the Rushville-Connersville road became part of the state highway system as Route 48. The long fight had been waged by the public affairs committees of Rotary and Kiwanis clubs in both Rushville and Connersville. Connersville was especially active in the fight because its residents more urgently felt the need of a state highway leading directly to Indianapolis. Their best route in the past had been north on State Route 34 to Cambridge City and then west on State Route 3 to Indianapolis.[20] In 1926 the "Minute Man Route" connecting Martinsville, Franklin, Shelbyville, and Rushville was joined to the Connersville road as a continuation

[16]Rushville *Republican*, January 3, February 11, 1920; Milroy *Press*, July 22, 1920; *Laws of Indiana*, 1919, Chapters 53, 112.

[17]Rushville *Republican*, January 3, 1922.

[18]*Ibid.*, June 2, 1921, January 3, February 7, 1922.

[19]*Ibid.*, February 14, 1922.

[20]*Ibid.*, April 9, 1923, November 13, 1924.

of the state highway and redesignated as State Route 44. Originally built as a hard surface highway in 1923, asphalt and concrete paving of the Rushville-Connersville road began in 1927 with the awarding of a million dollar contract for that purpose by the state highway commission. It was not until 1938, however, that the full length of Route 44 from Connersville to Shelbyville via Rushville was completely paved.[21]

Two other state highways passed through the county (see Figure 4): Route 39 ran from Indianapolis to the Ohio state line at Harrison by way of Rushville and Brookville; and Route 36 ran from Greensburg through Rushville to Dunreith on the National Road, and then to New Castle. These route numbers were also changed in 1926, the former to U.S. Route 52, the latter to State Route 3.[22] Because of the importance of the route to Indianapolis, U.S. Route 52 was one of the first, if not the first, concrete roads in the county. In 1920, even before it was designated a national highway, the county commissioners, using automobile license funds received from the state, authorized the concrete paving of the road from Rushville's west corporation line on Third Street to the Shelby County line west of Arlington, a distance of nine and a half miles. Construction moved ahead slowly until 1925 when Route 39 was designated part of the national highway system and eventually became U.S. Route 52 linking Chicago and Cincinnati. Construction of the concrete highway began in earnest early in 1926; after being closed for paving almost two years, it opened to traffic in November, 1927. Construction of the stretch of road between Rushville and Brookville began in 1928 and was opened to traffic in May, 1930.[23]

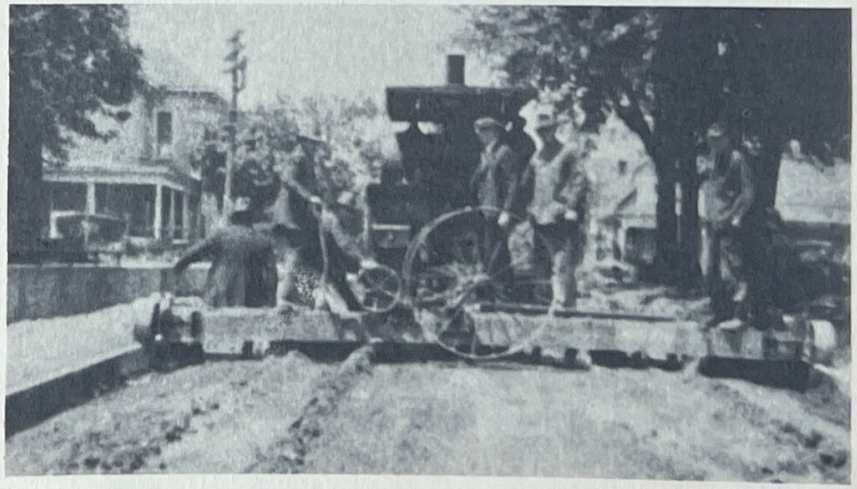
By 1930 State Route 3 had been paved between Old Williamstown and Greensburg, and Dunreith and New Castle,

[21] *Ibid.*, July 17, September 3, 1926, April 5, 1927, July 23, 1938.

[22] *Ibid.*, September 28, 1926.

[23] *Ibid.*, January 7, 1920, August 7, 1925, August 23, November 25, 1927, May 28, 1930.

Main Street, Mays, 1920s.



Paving U.S. 52, looking west to the intersection of the Homer and Carthage pikes, Arlington.

leaving the stretch through Rush County as the only unpaved portion in a through highway system from Detroit, Michigan, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, south to Chattanooga, Tennessee. Concrete paving of this road south from Rushville began in 1931 and was finished in 1933. Paving north from Rushville began in 1933 and was finished the following year. The completion of the paving of State Route 3 in June, 1934, gave Rush County for the first time a main north-south highway.[24]

It was not until 1932 that all the township roads in Rush County were finally turned over to the county highway system, together with all the road equipment the townships had on hand. In the future these roads would all be county highways and maintained by the county road department. The county highway system included just over 750 miles of improved and unimproved roads. Blacktopping these roads began in 1933 with the paving of some 25 miles of country and town roads. Milroy, New Salem, and Moscow, and the county roads around these communities, were the first to benefit. By 1936 about 10 percent of the country roads and town streets in the county had a hard surface. For the remainder of the decade about 20 miles of county roads were hard surfaced annually, giving the county, by 1940, about 210 miles of asphalt surfaced country and town roads.[25]

Until 1920 most of the city streets in Rushville and other county towns remained dirt, with only an annual summer oiling to keep down the dust. Thereafter, as state roads gradually acquired paved surfaces, so too did city streets. Brick pavement was placed on Third and Fort Wayne streets in the early twenties, along with a concrete surface on Memorial Park Boulevard. In 1925 an asphalt surface was placed on Main Street. The paving of alleys began about 1926. One of the first was the alley running north and south between Main and Morgan streets, and Third and Fourth streets. Not all property owners welcomed the expansion of paved streets. Street residents often sought to delay paving projects adopted by the city council because of costs of construction and disruption of use of the streets while construction progressed. In spite of objections, however, by the late 1920s the goal of the council had become dustless, paved streets throughout Rushville.[26]

The coming of improved roads and streets and the mobility provided by the automobile symbolized the advent of modernity to Rush County that forever ended the simpler, more uncomplicated life of the past. Historian Thomas D. Clark, speaking in 1961 of the effect of the automobile on the South, observed that "Detroit automobile makers set off the most effective Yankee invasion that ever disturbed southern complacency," an invasion that "had more long-range economic meaning for the South than all the Civil War generals combined. The established way of life in the South was shaken to its very foundation by this new Yankee machine."[27]

Professor Clark's observations apply also to Indiana's rural southern counties. In 1929 G. G. Eppley, director of recreation in Evansville, Vanderburgh County, addressing the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club in Rushville, spoke of how the rural way of life had changed compared to only twenty years earlier: work had become more routinized and disciplined; children lived a different life; life itself assumed more dangers; leisure time increased; community obligations increased; and human relationships were altered.[28] Eppley might have added that as life became more impersonal and interdependent, fear and alienation crept into rural life.

The response in Rush County to the fear and alienation prompted by the changed way of life can be seen in the growth of the Ku Klux Klan movement. The Klan had its rebirth in the South and crossed the Ohio River in late 1920, organizing its

[24] *Ibid.*, November 7, 1930, July 9, 1932, October 5, 1933, June 1, 1934.
[25] *Ibid.*, September 13, 16, 1932, June 29, 1933, January 7, 1937, January 5, 1939.
[26] *Ibid.*, June 8, 1920, November 5, 1925, July 10, 1926, April 6, 1927.
[27] Quoted in James J. Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), p. 152.
[28] Rushville *Republican*, April 2, 1929.

first Klavern in Indiana in the Ohio River town of Evansville. The Klan heralded as its motto "America First" and proclaimed its aim to "enforce the laws when officials fail."[29] The introduction of the Klan to Rush County came the following year in the form of a "feeler" sent to local citizens inquiring about interest in joining the Klan. This questionnaire asked the prospective member his parentage, birthplace, religious faith, and political preference. A cover letter accompanying the questionnaire gave the membership fee as ten dollars and indicated that contact had been made on the recommendation of a "friend." The letter also included an Indianapolis address to which the completed questionnaire was to be sent. Enclosed with the questionnaire was a pamphlet explaining the purposes of the organization.[30]

It is not known how many of these "feelers" were sent into Rush County, but in 1921 sentiment opposing the Klan seemed widespread in Rushville. Republican mayor Rudolph Scudder took a particularly strong stand against the society. "There is no way," noted a town newspaper, "whereby the mayor or any other official could prevent the Ku Klux Klan from organizing, but they could punish infractions of the law charged against such an organization."[31] Such opposition did not prevent the society from mobilizing. What was probably the first meeting of the Klan in Rush County was held on October 10, 1921, near the offices of the *Republican* on North Perkins. A reporter, describing the Klan's appearance, remarked, "so stealth-like was the tread of the Klan, so hushed the voices of the white-robed figures, so stringent the rules by which the 'inner circle' was admitted, that none knew about it until the police tipped it off to the reporter." The meeting disbanded quietly when ordered to do so by the police at the direction of the mayor.[32]

This nucleus of Klan supporters, aided by organizers sent down from Indianapolis, did not allow the aborting of their first meeting to deter further efforts at organization. The first meeting of the Rush County Horse Thief Detective Association was held in January, 1922.[33] This was the enforcement arm of the Klan that raided bootleggers, gamblers, and disorderly houses, and stopped and searched cars on the highway. By the end of 1922 the Klan had grown so large that it required the Coliseum in City Park for its meeting.

On January 19, 1923, in the darkened Coliseum, the Klan held a meeting that attracted what was probably the largest crowd ever seen there to that time. The crowd was there to hear an address by the Reverend Mr. Verle W. Blair, formerly minister of the Central Christian Church at Terre Haute and a traveling representative of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Just before the address was to begin, all the lights in the Coliseum were turned off and on the stage a fiery cross blazed. Then about two score white-robed, hooded men appeared, one of whom carried a large American flag. They circled about the stage, and when all were seated Blair stepped to the front of the stage and said, "I came here this evening representing the Imperial Palace of Atlanta and from headquarters of the realm of Indiana to talk through with you a most needed subject," the principles of the Klan. Then with a dramatic gesture he removed his hood and declared he was proud to be a member of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. On the table beside him lay an open Bible and a small American flag. Directly in front of the fiery cross stood the hooded man carrying the large American flag.[34]

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[29]David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 162-74; Rushville *Republican*, February 15, 1921.

[30]Rushville *Republican*, September 28, 1921.

[31]*Ibid.*

[32]*Ibid.*, October 11, 1921.

[33]*Ibid.*, January 9, October 28, 1922.

[34]*Ibid.*, January 20, 1923; *Fiery Cross*, February 9, 1923.

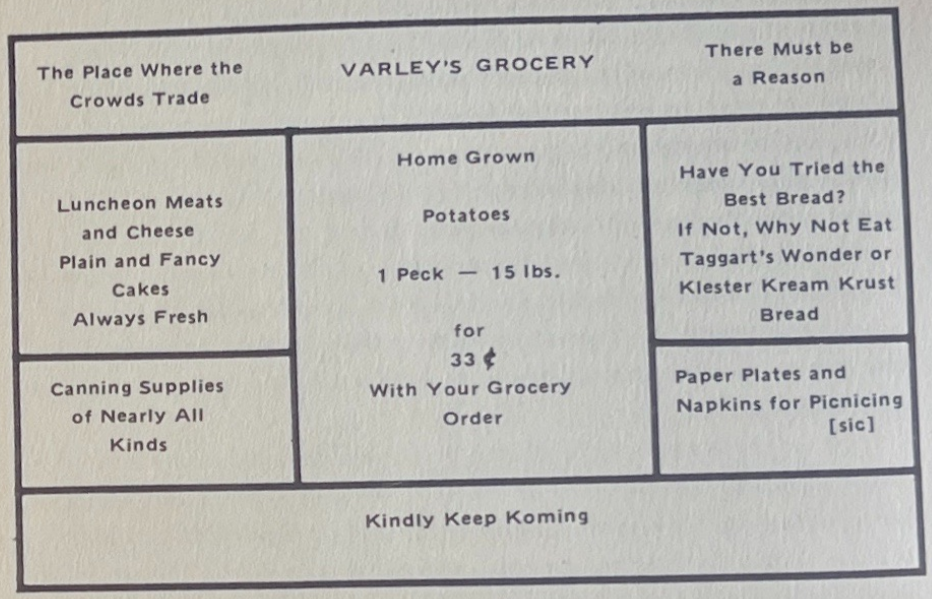
The Klan, Blair declared, was not anti-Negro, anti-Jew, anti-Catholic, or anti-anything else. But, he said, the Invisible Empire believed that no person could be a true American and owe his allegiance to anything above the American flag. A member should be a white, male, gentile, native-born Protestant who owed no allegiance to any sect, foreign power, prince, or potentate. The Klan, he declared, had no complaint against Negro, Jew, or Catholic, though it might disagree with such persons on religious grounds, so long as they were loyal American citizens and did not place their allegiance above the American flag. He referred to the fact that both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, father and savior of the country, were white, gentile, native-born Protestants. He asserted that the Anglo-Saxon race should remain supreme in this nation so as to maintain the ideals for which the Pilgrims came to America over three hundred years ago. It was the fervent hope of the Klan, he said, that every child would have the right to go to a school over which floated the American flag and in every room of which lay an open Bible for reading to the children. Notwithstanding the oversimplification of Blair's remarks, his expression of its principles probably represented how most county residents understood the purposes of the Klan.[35]

Growth of the Klan continued through the summer of 1923. Hundreds attended meetings throughout the county, fiery crosses illuminated the night sky, and more and more merchants appealed for Klan trade with thinly disguised advertisements such as the one illustrated.[36]

In July a crowd estimated at two thousand attended a meeting of the Klan at the old fairgrounds east of Rushville. The meeting was for the purpose of having a dual initiation of men and women. The growth and activities of the Klan doubtless generated hostility among some county residents, for the meeting had just commenced—the introductory song completed and the

[35] *Fiery Cross*, February 9, 1923.

[36] Rushville *Republican*, August 17, 21, 22, July 3, 1923.


The Place Where the Crowds Trade
VARLEY'S GROCERY
There Must be a Reason
Luncheon Meats and Cheese Plain and Fancy Cakes Always Fresh
Home Grown
Potatoes
1 Peck — 15 lbs.
for
33 ¢
With Your Grocery Order
Have You Tried the Best Bread? If Not, Why Not Eat Taggart's Wonder or Klester Kream Krust Bread
Canning Supplies of Nearly All Kinds
Paper Plates and Napkins for Picnicing [sic]
Kindly Keep Koming

A Klan Folktale

There is an often repeated Klan related story concerning the father of Dr. Donald Dean and a knifing encounter during a KKK parade passing by his office at Main and Fourth Street.

Dean set the record straight. "There was a parade at another time, and Dr. H. V. Logan was watching it from what was then the Cameron property, just south of the Christian Church. He was standing about six feet from me. He had not removed his hat when the parade came by and was jostled by a spectator. He felt that he was about to be attacked and had his pocket knife out. This was all it amounted to, but the rumor spread very widely that Dr. Logan had stabbed a Klansman."

speaker having made only a few remarks—when a volley of shots erupted from the northwest part of the fairgrounds. The shooting came from an area concealed by bushes and about 300 yards from the speakers' stand. Possibly ten shots were fired, all of which were aimed directly at the speaker, but none of which found its mark. At least two guns were believed to have been used. Panic reigned as bullets whistled past people's heads and through trees. Many fell to the ground. Others ran. Many children and women were stepped on in the excitement. Although two men were wounded, none was seriously hurt.[37]

Subsequent investigation failed to identify the assailants, but the *Fiery Cross*, the Klan newspaper in Indiana, blamed the Unity League (which it described as an "un-American" organization opposed to the Klan and Protestantism) for the shooting. The newspaper believed that "the perpetrators of the crime were shipped into the city and left immediately after the shooting."[38] Regardless of who initiated the attack, a well-attended second meeting was held on the following night and no untoward disturbances marred the event. Indeed, the local Klan felt so unthreatened that they planned an extravagant homecoming and celebration for the following Labor Day. In a one-half page advertisement in the *Fiery Cross* the local Klan declared:[39]

Headed for Rushville, Ind.
on
Labor Day, September 3d
Home-coming and Celebration
Klansmen and their families, the Old Man,
Mrs. Barr and other national speakers
will be here. Plenty of music, entertainment and plenty to eat. Special
Rates on All Lines.
C O M E

[37] *Ibid.*, July 3, 1923.
[38] *Fiery Cross*, July 13, 1923.
[39] *Ibid.*, August 10, 31, 1923.

You Will Never Regret a Visit to Rushville
In the Heart of Hoosierland
It Is Our Duty to Entertain You. We Will Do Our Duty.

The Labor Day homecoming and celebration at the old fairgrounds attracted thousands of Klansmen from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The local Klan officials had planned for 100,000 or more Klansmen and their families and members of the women's organization, but a heavy downpour of rain Labor Day morning probably helped in holding down the numbers to far less than expected. Those who attended estimated the actual number at about 10,000 persons, but several people "on the inside" estimated the crowd between 3,000 and 5,000.

To handle the crowd, hooded Klansmen stood at Second and Perkins, and Morgan and Second streets directing visitors to the fairgrounds. More hooded Klansmen stood along the route directing traffic. By early afternoon automobiles were backed up all along the route from the city to the fairgrounds. The traction line provided a special shuttle train to the fairgrounds, but it did not have much business because most Klansmen and their families came by automobile.

A landing field had been prepared so "The Old Man," D. C. (David Clarke) Stephenson, could arrive by airplane from Marion, but he failed to show up. Mrs. Daisy Douglas Barr, head of the women's organization, also failed to arrive. These were major disappointments for the local Klan, but nothing compared to the gargantuan waste experienced from the huge supply of food prepared for the large crowd that had been expected. The county Klan organization recouped some of the loss by shipping truckloads of food to Indianapolis to be sold at the state fairgrounds, but it still lost considerable money on the event. This probably helps to explain why other affairs of this type were never planned.[40]

The local Klan probably played little part in the election of a Democratic mayor in Rushville in 1921, but it played an

[40] Rushville *Republican*, September 3, 4, 1923.

important role in the general election of 1924. The landslide victory in 1920 had given Republicans complete control of Rush County government, but by 1924 the situation had markedly changed. By then the Republican county officeholders had come to be stigmatized as "that courthouse ring." The cause of that charge was the officeholders' attitude toward the Klan. Controlling the local party machinery these Republicans, by omission and in part by commission, refused to endorse the party's Klan-supported gubernatorial candidate, Ed Jackson. Precinct committeemen charged that instead of supporting Jackson, the "courthouse ring" was openly working for the Democratic candidate, Dr. Carlton B. McCulloch. The "ring" apparently was so bitter in its hatred of the Klan that it refused to have any part in the victory Jackson's county supporters, the precinct committeemen, were working for. The "ring's" ostracism of Klan-supported candidates split the local Republican party wide open in the 1924 election.

Charge and countercharge ran rampant and rumor flourished through the fall election. Some charged the "ring" with waging relentless war on the party organization, and doing everything in its power to beat Klansmen and candidates known to have the support of the Klan. Others believed that Republican Klansmen had made a deal for Democratic support of their gubernatorial candidate in return for which they would help elect the Democrats' county ticket. Rumors flew about the horse trading going on between Republican and Democratic party leaders and rank and file members of both parties for and against the Klan.[41] Whatever the truth of the matter, the Klan proved a very divisive force in the election.

When the votes were counted, it was clear much ticket splitting had taken place. The Republican Jackson carried the county, but every county office up for election except that of coroner was won by the Democrats. The landslide victory of four years earlier had turned to ashes in the mouths of the Republicans. Analysis of voter behavior suggests some basis for the charge of deal making on the part of members of both parties. For state offices, county Republican votes exceeded those of Democrats by almost 9 percentage points, with Jackson getting 5,116 votes, or 54.2 percent of the votes cast, while McCulloch got 4,287 votes, or 45.4 percent. At the county level this distribution was almost completely reversed. Loren Martin, who headed the Republican ticket as candidate for county clerk, got 4,222 votes, or 45.3 percent of the votes cast, while his Democratic opponent Leonard Barlow got 5,088 votes, or 54.7 percent. The *Republican* reported, "The delay in precinct election boards reporting returns was due to the large number of scratched ballots." The paper estimated that not more than one fourth of the ballots cast were straight party votes.[42]

Perhaps of equal importance with the high incidence of ticket splitting was the high percentage of eligible voters who failed to cast a ballot. In 1920, when many of the same Republican candidates who ran in 1924 were running, voter turnout exceeded 89 percent. Just four years later approximately 77 percent of the eligible voters turned out. Apparently many voters, particularly Republicans, objected to the name calling and mud slinging and instead of voting decided to assume the attitude of "a plague on both your houses" and stayed home. The 1924 election represented a deviating type election rather than a realigning type, since Republican voter pluralities returned the party to power in county politics in 1926 and again in 1928.[43]

Whatever advantage the Democratic party candidates had gained from local Klan activity in 1924 disappeared in the Rushville mayoral election of 1925. In April of that year the

[41]Milroy *Press*, October 17, 1924; Rushville *Republican*, October 29, 31, 1924; Milroy *Press*, October 31, November 3, 1924; Ike Baker Oral History Tape, August 3, 1974, in Rushville Public Library.

[42]*Rush County, Indiana. Voting in General Elections, 1890-1965* (Indianapolis, 1967), p. 18; Milroy *Press*, November 7, 1924; Rushville *Republican*, November 5, 1924.

[43]*Rush County, Indiana. Voting in General Elections*, pp. 16, 18-20.

father of Madge Oberholtzer charged "The Old Man" of Indiana Klandom with murder. Madge had taken poison after having been repeatedly sexually attacked by Stephenson in his private drawing room on a train to Chicago. The trial of the former Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana dragged on for months, bringing dishonor to the whole image of the Klan. Rushville attorney John H. Kiplinger, who had been appointed to a state advisory commission by Governor Jackson, directed the trial defense of Stephenson. At the time, Kiplinger also served as legal advisor to Walter Thomas, the incumbent Democratic mayor seeking reelection. In the minds of many voters the "Kiplinger Connection" represented a visual link between the Klan-supported Democrat mayor and the trial revelations of the sordid activity of the Klan.[44] While Klan candidates did well in numerous Indiana municipal elections in 1925, in Rushville the Republicans made a clean sweep of city offices.[45]

When the doors of the Michigan City penitentiary closed behind Stephenson in 1925 as he began his life sentence for second-degree murder, the decline of the Klan had begun. In January, 1928, state attorney general Arthur L. Gilliom filed suit to revoke the Invisible Empire's charter. He charged the Klan's true intention was "to secretly gain control of politics and government and to utilize constituted offices occupied by members of the said organization to conduct government in violation of constitutional guarantees applicable to citizens who are ineligible to its membership, and in accordance with intolerant laws enacted by legislative officers controlled by said corporation and its officers." This suit by the attorney general, though it was not pursued because the Klan had become so weak, marked the political demise of the Invisible Empire in the Hoosier state.[46]

Politics returned to normal for Rush County Republicans in 1926. They won back all but two of the offices—sheriff and surveyor—they had lost in 1924. In the 1928 general election they reestablished themselves as the majority party, winning all offices except surveyor. More importantly, they won half of the offices with pluralities of 60 percent or more.[47] Little else returned to "normal." Although the nightmare of the Klan had passed, the changes that prompted its appeal had not.

[44]Rushville *Republican*, April 4, 1925; Milroy *Press*, November 21, 1924, October 27, 1925; James H. Madison, *Indiana Through Tradition and Change: A History of the Hoosier State and Its People, 1920-1945* (Indianapolis, 1982), pp. 68-69.

[45]Rushville *Republican*, November 4, 1925.

[46]*Ibid.*, July 23, 1930.

[47]*Rush County, Indiana. Voting in General Elections*, pp. 19, 20.

Rush County and the Klan

The Klan in Falmouth

Fred Knotts: "One time at the Fairview cemetery, which is just a mile south of Falmouth, there was a KKK funeral. The pallbearers wore their white robes and hoods. There were a few people around who had Klan leanings, but I've never heard of any intimidation or cross-burning activity. I think it was pretty slim pickin's for Klan organizers here. There were and are several Catholic families in the area, but I don't know that they were targeted by the KKK. That's been a long time ago."

Mary Wiley: "One of our best clerks was Catholic, and the Klan threatened to blacklist our store if we didn't fire her and sign up for membership. We did no such thing, and I don't think our business was hurt one bit."

The Klan in Gowdy

Lowell Gosnell: "In the early part of the twenties there was the Ku Klux Klan around this part of the county. I remember a man who burned a cross in Gowdy. It was right back of the church, and I could see it out of the window."

The Klan in Homer

Eva Robinson: "I'm sorry to say that my father, along with a lot of other men around here, belonged to the KKK for a short time. Less than a year, Dad said. They met in people's houses, and for a while it seemed to be an exciting, patriotic kind of club. I had the experience of going to a funeral at Milroy where the KKK participated. The neighbor who took us was a KKK; his son-in-law drove. We had to let them out at a farm house before we got to the cemetery. We went on to the graveyard, and after a while here came a parade of the Ku Kluxers with their white outfits on. They had on their sheets and pillowcases with the peaked top and slits in the masks. We were all standing there as they marched in. I was about eleven or twelve years old, and I kept watching the men's feet and shoes as they went by. I finally spotted what I wanted and said, 'There's Dad! There's Dad!,' and say, did I ever get a good jerking! So far as I know, it was the first and the last time he ever marched with them."

The Klan in Manilla

Wayne Carmony: "All the information I have about the Ku Klux Klan came from my father; it was way before my time. He told me that in the twenties, about the time the Klan was at its peak, that there was a big Klan rally in Manilla; and as I remember the story, he said that there were 1,200 people there in white robes and hoods. I am sure that the Klan was very active around Manilla."

The Klan in Mays

Frances Benner: "The Klan was active around Mays. To my knowledge, there were never any cross burnings, threats, or violent activity. There were some parades. A lot of good citizens around here were duped into joining the Klan, but when certain facts were finally revealed, they ended their membership and would have nothing more to do with it."

The Klan in Milroy

Viola VanOsdol: "There were quite a few. I know by the number of men who marched in parades on Main Street that there had to be. We kids were standing along the street watching them parade in their white sheets and hoods, and a girl friend said, 'There's my dad; there's nobody else as pigeon-toed as he is.' He overheard his daughter, looked around, and even under his hood, we knew him."

Louise Elliott: "I remember one night the KKK burned a cross at Chautauqua because there was some speaker who didn't suit their taste; so we had a fiery cross. It durn near scared all of

us kids to death. Oh, it was a big one; they didn't go halfway on that night! They had big boards wrapped in straw and soaked in kerosene."

John Meek: "I think that the Klan had a big temporary membership in this community as well as all over Rush County. We think it's regrettable now, but it was a pretty popular organization for a short while."

The Klan in Moscow

Mildred Norvell: "Although KKK activity was over by the time we moved here, the repercussions were still being felt into the 1930s. It was evidenced by a divided local church in which one faction which belonged to the Klan stayed in one place for services and those opposed went to another."

Ruth Wagoner: "One of the main Klan meeting places in Rush County was right over here on SR 244."

Charles Norvell: "Also, there was great activity in Blue Ridge over on the Rush-Shelby County line, at the west end of Orange Township. There was lots of Klan activity that spilled over into the Moscow neighborhood. While I don't know of any buildings being burned here, I know that St. Vincent's Catholic Church was burned in Shelby County."

Ruth Wagoner: "I don't know who the KKK was going to 'get' down around here. We had no Negroes, Catholics, or Jews. I don't know the answer. I do know they interfered in politics a lot and elected the whole Democratic county ticket through their support."

Charles Norvell: "Where I lived on the Rush County line, out by Blue Ridge, they tried to control with whom people did business. We had always done our threshing with Mr. Riley. A member of the threshing ring came to Dad and asked him to join the Klan, and said that if he wouldn't, they wouldn't thresh for him anymore. We had another near neighbor who was Catholic and who also did threshing. So Dad told the Klan that if he was pressured to join, he would do his threshing with the Catholic. I really think in that case they wanted to dominate people. But they didn't enforce the threat against my Dad. Most folks who joined were ashamed of it afterwards and refused to talk about it."

The Klan in New Salem

McCoy Carr: "I've got a very graphic recollection of what happened once in the twenties in Jesse Stevens' barber shop. I went up there one Saturday night to get a haircut; there were about six or seven men there in addition to Jesse. It turned out that they were all Ku Kluxers. I never could see that KKK business, and we got into a pretty hot argument. The next week I got a letter. I don't know who sent it, but it was signed KKK. It said that if I didn't keep my mouth shut from here on, they were going to come and horse-whip me. I slept with an automatic pistol under my pillow for eighteen months."

The Klan in Rushville

Joe Pike: "I recall a shock experienced by my father. He did not go for the kind of ideas that the KKK had. One day a group of them came to the store, Haydon's Hardware, and took A. Gunn Haydon into the back room. Mr. Haydon was informed that unless he joined the KKK, along with all of his clerks, his store would be boycotted. Mr. Haydon, believing they had the power to do this, went to the cash register and got four ten dollar bills, making himself, my father Hal Pike, John Moore, and Charles Schaeffer all members of the KKK. They never did pick up their uniforms.

"My grandfather was persuaded by one of the political leaders in Richland Township that the KKK, like the American Legion, protected the country's honor. He talked my grandfather into becoming a member. When my grandfather found out what the KKK really was, he took his robe and put it up in the rafters in the privy. My grandmother found it and remarked that that was exactly where it belonged."

Kenneth McCully: "A man was shot at a KKK gathering out at the old fairgrounds. There was a county-wide conclave of the Klan, and someone over on the railroad embankment fired a rifle. That bullet ended up against the teeth of Fred Woods, a barber in George Suesse's shop on Third Street across from the old fire station. It didn't break his teeth, but it penetrated his cheek; several years later he showed me the bullet. They never found out who fired the shot."

Isabel Pike: "Mr. Kelly, the highly respected Catholic grocer, was literally broken-hearted when he lost so much business because of the KKK."

Eloise Kelly Lakin: "The Klan headquarters were upstairs over my father's store on downtown Main Street. He was boycotted by KKK families, former friends who had been customers for years. He would watch onetime customers pass the grocery window, and, without a look into his store, climb the stairs next door to attend the KKK meetings. His business fell off to practically nothing. He simply could not believe what was happening. Although he, his family, or the store was never harmed physically, we were sure that bewilderment and hurt was a factor in his early death at the height of Klan bigotry."

Isabel Pike: "There were lots of cross burnings in and around Rushville during this time. They were burned on Cavitt's hill. Joe Schocke was quite a prominent member of the KKK, and they burned them on his farm. They would stop traffic on what is now SR 3. We were the only people who lived in that neighborhood who still had an old Model T Ford, so of course everyone knew us. But they would stop us and say they didn't know who we were. That was the only time I would ever hear my father swear because he would be so mad. My mother and I were Catholic, and she would be scared to death—my father, Ross Schrader, was not Catholic.

"I was in St. Mary's during the days of the Ku Klux Klan but I recall only one incident, although I am sure there were many more. One day, following a Klan parade, several Klansmen, in their white robes and hoods, rode their horses up to the school house. Sister said for us to sit quietly at our desks. After riding around the school several times, they went to the convent and rode around it, stopping occasionally, threatening to dismount. After a while they rode away."

D. I. Dean: "One time my father turned onto north Main Street, having just completed a house call in the country, and found himself at the tail end of a long line of cars. He didn't know it was a KKK parade. He recalled noticing that people pointed him out as they stood along the parade lines. I don't know when he realized that he was in the parade, but he was not a member of the KKK, and he was really embarrassed."

Old St. Mary's School, Rushville, early 1920s.

Chapter 3
A Different World

The Ku Klux Klan was in part a response to the changes taking place in society. Foremost among such changes were those that took place in the family. Conventional wisdom has it that by the 1920s the rural community remained the last bastion of the large family. However true that may be for other rural communities, it was not true for Rush County. Even in 1920 parents had, on average, fewer than two children. The average family size rose slightly during the twenties but dropped during the Depression. In 1920 the average family size was 3.67; in 1930, 3.70; and in 1940, 3.61.[1] Rush County's average family size was actually below the national average, which was 4.03 in 1929 and 3.70 in 1941.[2] During this interbellum period a relatively low birth rate was the principal cause of the small family. Annual births in Rush County averaged a total of 358.6, or 18.5 per thousand population, during the 1920s and 287, or 15.2 per thousand, during the 1930s.[3] The smaller family size and fewer children brought not only greater freedom to women, but also more attention to and concern for the individual child.

Women perhaps did not experience the "revolution in manners and morals" described by Frederick Lewis Allen in his classic *Only Yesterday*, but they nevertheless enjoyed greater freedom and participation in public life than had their grandmothers. Women's suffrage in 1920 opened the way for more active participation in public affairs and the assumption of greater influence in local politics. In 1920, for the first time, a

The automobile generation, Rushville, 1926.

[1]Calculated from data in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), III, *Population . . . by States*, p. 294; *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Population*, III, *Reports by States*, Pt. 1, p. 740, VI, *Families*, p. 416.

[2]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C., 1960), p. 166.

[3]Calculated from data in Indiana State Board of Health, *Indiana Births, 1900-1965* (Indianapolis, [1966]), p. 99.

woman was considered for appointment to the Rushville school board.[4] In that same year the proprietors of the "Yellow Dog," a dry beer parlor, charged in police court with renting a building for gambling purposes, faced a jury composed of twelve women. Though they never received the $1.10 jury fee due them for their service, they were the first women jurors in the history of Rushville.[5] Women did not serve on the grand or petit juries of the Rush Circuit Court until 1935 because, on the advice of the circuit judge, the names of women were systematically excluded from the box from which names for jury service were drawn. A state Supreme Court decision in 1935 dealing with trials at which neither women nor blacks were eligible for jury duty set the stage for "the first trial in Rush circuit court history at which women . . . sat on a jury."[6]

Women more and more moved outside the home to participate in community life. The (male) editor of the *Republican* in 1927 lamented that "modernism develops more Clubs and Societies for 'Friend Wife' than humble man ever imagined would be organized." The " 'Mrs.' of Rushville," he continued, "belongs to 85 different women's organizations which claim the attention and attendance of the able-bodied society women of this small city most of the time."[7] A woman might be gone from home virtually every day if she chose to attend meetings or rehearsals of such diverse organizations as the Woman's Club, the community orchestra, the Diapasons Society, the Rush County Chautauqua, the Tri Kappa Society, or the Hodges Branch "Coon Dog" orchestra. Change in the status of women prompted the pastor of St. Paul's M.E. Church to present a series of sermons entitled "The Girl of Today."[8] By the end of the twenties there were enough business and professional women in Rushville to organize a local Business and Professional Women's Club.[9]

Women's freedom and activity apparently led to family tension and a rise in the divorce rate. In 1919 there were twenty divorces granted, or one for every nine marriage licenses issued. Sixteen of these divorces were granted to the wife as the injured party and only four to the husband. By 1929 the annual number of divorces had increased to twenty-six, one for every six marriage licenses issued. Even more interesting, the distribution of aggrieved parties was totally reversed with only six divorces granted to wives while twenty were granted to husbands. The number of both marriages and divorces temporarily declined during the Depression, but both increased as economic conditions improved. In 1937 fifty-four divorces were filed and thirty-four were granted, roughly one for every seven marriage licenses issued. The Depression, however, reversed the situation of the majority being granted to men; all but two of those receiving divorces in 1937 were women. The trend toward increased divorce continued through 1939 with sixty-one divorces filed and forty-six granted, one for every four marriage licenses issued.[10]

Women's appearance changed to match their greater freedom and activity. In 1919 few women smoked, or wore short skirts and flesh-colored stockings. Their hair was long and make-up (unless well concealed) was associated with actresses or fast women, if not free love. The female silhouette presented a woman with a skirt six inches from the ground, shoulders sloping, the figure flat (and slouching), and the point of greatest width at the hips. In summer, protecting the skin from the sun took on the aura of a fetish. In winter, not only did women wear more layers of clothing, but the garments themselves and the names for them—corset cover, combination, bloomers, petticoat,

[4]Rushville *Republican*, May 24, 1920.

[5]*Ibid.*, December 22, 1920, August 8, 1934.

[6]*Ibid.*, December 27, 1922, May 13, 29, 1935; Walter *v.* State of Indiana, 208 Ind. 231 (1935).

[7]Rushville *Republican*, June 25, 1927.

[8]*Ibid.*, October 10, 1924.

[9]*Ibid.*, February 12, 1929.

[10]"County Clerk's Report," *ibid.*, January 27, 1920, February 2, 1929, January 27, 1938, February 20, 1940.

and drawers—seem strange now. Few women wore low shoes in winter without spats to protect their ankles from the cold; if they did not wear spats, they wore high laced "walking-boots"—some of them very high—that might have buckskin, kidskin, cloth, or suede tops.[11]

Women's hems climbed a few inches between 1919 and 1920, then descended again. Beginning in 1923 the skirt began an ascent that by 1927 took it all the way to the knee and even above. There it remained until late in 1929. Gone were black stockings, white stockings, brown stockings; flesh-colored stockings became as standard as short skirts. Stockings were probably silk rather than cotton, and having made their arrival early in the 1920s they remained a virtually unchanging item of fashion for at least twenty-five years. Petticoats almost vanished, and the tendency was to drop off one layer of clothing after another. Not content with the freedom of short and skimpy clothes, women also sought the freedom of short hair. By 1926 nearly all girls were wearing their hair short; older women were fast following them. Bobbed hair became almost universal among women in their twenties, very common among women in their thirties and forties, and by no means rare among women of sixty. The most fashionable version was the shingle, and the ladies' hairdressing business, stimulated by acceptance of the permanent wave, boomed. In 1920 Rushville had no beauty parlors, but by 1929 the city had three and by 1939, nine. Women almost universally adopted the small cloche that fitted tightly on the bobbed head like a Viking helmet. Rouge and lipstick that in 1919 were the sign of a scarlet woman, by the end of the decade were being used by women of all ages and stations in life. Thin was beautiful. The popular discovery of vitamins was not the only reason for the increased sale of fruit juices and fresh vegetables: women were reducing as never before.[12]

The stock market crash curbed the changes in women's appearance. Skirt lengths came down with stock prices. By 1933 they reached to within a foot or even nine inches of the ground. Bobbed hair progressively lost favor. Shoulder length or almost shoulder length hair was curled at the back. The severe helmet hat pulled down on the back of the head gave way to a variety of styles that sought prettiness, pertness, a gentler look. Some women even began to put their hair up, while others rebelled at the idea. Hatlessness became more common. Ruffles and bows came back; gone was the long-waisted look. The flat figure was also abandoned; the dressed up little girl once again became the mature woman. In its turn, maturity, too, began to pall. As the Depression eased skirts gradually became shorter and shorter; by 1939 they had risen again almost to the knee. The short evening dress (for practicality's sake) appeared but had not supplanted the sweeping one. By 1940 the open-toed shoe had arrived.[13]

In contrast to women, men looked in 1940 very much as they had in 1919. Although the standardization of men's attire increased dramatically, a well-dressed man of 1919 would hardly have attracted attention if he appeared on the street in 1940. Only a few eccentrics dared to abandon the ubiquitous hat. Fads had less effect on men than on women, although interest in golf and country club life in general did increase in the 1920s. In 1921, 125 men joined together to organize a country club to be located a mile and a half northwest of Rushville. Since "plus fours" (the name meant that they were four inches longer than knickerbockers had previously been) had become standard wear for men on the links, they probably made their appearance in

[11]The characterizations of the dress of Rush County residents come from impressions derived from pictures in the Bessie Colvin Scrapbooks, Rush County Historical Society, Rushville; Agnes Rogers, *I Remember Distinctly* (New York, 1947); Joseph J. Schroeder, Jr. (ed.), *Sears, Roebuck & Co., 1908 Catalogue*, No. 117 (Chicago, 1969); David L. Cohn, *The Good Old Days* (New York, 1940).

[12]Colvin Scrapbooks; Rogers, *I Remember Distinctly*; Cohn, *The Good Old Days*; *Rushville City Directory*, 1921, 1929, 1939. A Lucky Strike advertisement encouraged cigarette smoking among women by advising "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet." Rushville *Republican*, January 7, 1930.

[13]Colvin Scrapbooks; Rogers, *I Remember Distinctly*; Cohn, *The Good Old Days*.

the county at this time. Their arrival, however, hardly constituted a change in dress style comparable to that experienced by women.[14]

Like women, young people also felt the sharp impact of change. Boys as well as girls became more sophisticated in dress as well as behavior, though the attitude "men are God's trees, women are His flowers" remained strong. In greater numbers than ever before youth went in for a new frankness of talk, an excited (if not obsessed) interest in sex, a tolerant acceptance of the use of alcohol, and acceptance, too, of the permissibility of the petting party (to use the favored term of the day) and a general retreat from traditional manners. Student humor illustrates the change in behavior of youth in the twenties. In 1919 relations between the sexes remained staid, prim, and proper: "Blanche: 'You should see my father before you ask to marry me.' Tom: 'I've seen him several times, but I want to marry you anyway.' " By 1927, relations had become freer and more frank:[15]

Harry: "What do you mean by coming to a dance with me and then spending all your time in an alcove?"
Martha: "That wasn't no alcove—that was a Cadillac."

"Just think of it," explained Tillie, the romantic. "A few words mumbled over your head and you're married."
"Yes," agreed Virginia, the cynical, "and a few words mumbled in your sleep and you're divorced."

John: "Tom, have you ever been arrested for speeding?"
Tom: "No, but I've been slapped for being too fast."

A county grand jury investigation in 1921 revealed a departure by local youths from the restraints of convention. This concerned cigarette smoking by young people. The investigation prompted Judge Will Sparks to restate the regulation against youthful smoking. State law, he said, made it "unlawful for any person, under 21 years of age, either by himself or through any other person, or by any means, directly or indirectly, to buy, receive or accept for his own use, or the use of any other person, or to keep or own or have in his possession, or to sell, either as principal or agent, or to use, any cigarette or cigarette paper, under the penalty of a fine not to exceed $100, or three months in jail, or both."[16] Within a few years youthful smoking seemed a mild offense compared to the youthful drinking, vandalism, fraudulent check passing, petty thievery, and rape that increasingly plagued the community.

Police blamed youthful crime on young boys whose parents did not know where they were after dark. At the urging of the police, the city council passed a curfew ordinance that compelled "children to be off the street by 8 o'clock at night."[17] "The criminal tendency in youth" was attributed by the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church "to the lack of spiritual training in the home—'an appalling spiritual illiteracy throughout the land.' "[18] The home, the church, and community and service organizations sought to combat the growth in youthful crime by establishing such activities as an Annual "Kids" Frolic, a boys' camp, contests, a Boys' and Girls' Club Roundup, a Barrow Club, and other youth organizations. Dr. John Thompson, pastor of the Methodist Temple in Chicago, described the problem to a large Chautauqua audience in Rushville. "Your boy and my boy, and your girl and my girl," he said, "are in more danger in their leisure than in their business, unless they make the proper use of their leisure." At the same Chautauqua, W. N. Ferris, United States senator from Michigan and twice governor of the state, described how it had been in his day. Children did as they were told by their parents, he said, because "We had to!" When only ten years old he had gone into the field with his father to help

[14]Colvin Scrapbooks; Rogers, *I Remember Distinctly*; Cohn, *The Good Old Days*; Rushville *Republican*, October 19, 1921.
[15]*The Rambler*, 1919 (Arlington High School yearbook); *The Holcad*, 1927 (Rushville High School yearbook).
[16]Rushville *Republican*, December 1, 1921.
[17]*Ibid.*, January 4, 1922.
[18]*Ibid.*, July 27, 1925.

him on the place and learn the "business." "The girls in the household," he went on, "washed the dishes and did other household chores. The family stayed together, went places together, and lived together." Today, he lamented, "we have Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and other clubs . . . because . . . boys and girls are lost from their parents, and have no place to go."[19]

Parents received much of the blame for the errancy of youth. Dr. W.E.J. Gratz of Chicago, addressing the annual commencement of Rushville High School in 1930, declared the present generation no worse than the ones before. Young people were not to blame for many things that they did because of the lack of direction offered by the older generation. "The adult generation," he said, "having lost the whip, razor strap and shingle, hasn't been able to find a suitable substitute."[20] Crime and complaints that the "unspanked generation," as Gratz called them, were loitering in the streets late at night continued. In 1931 the Rushville City Council passed a new ordinance with a more realistic 9 o'clock curfew hour, but the problem remained. In 1939 the police chief announced that "youngsters under sixteen years of age, unless accompanied by older persons or on lawful business, will be ordered off the streets after 9 o'clock every night except Saturdays."[21] Despite the chief's efforts at curfew enforcement juvenile delinquency continued.

Changes that brought young people into trouble with authority also brought an increased emphasis on education. Table 2 shows Rush County school attendance during these years. School attendance increased markedly during the 1920s. Grade school attendance became almost universal, and high school and post high school education showed substantial gains. In 1940 grade school attendance declined from the high of a decade earlier, but high school and post high school education continued their steady increase. Moreover, though girls continued to

[19] *Ibid.*, August 14, 15, 1925.
[20] *Ibid.*, May 29, 1930.
[21] *Ibid.*, October 21, 1931, January 5, 1939.

Table 2. Rush County School Attendance

Age, School Attendance	1920	1930	1940
Persons 7 to 13 years inclusive	2,571	2,797	2,311
Number attending school	2,453	2,765	2,199
Percent attending school	95.4	98.9	95.2
Persons 14 and 15 years	668	728	793
Number attending school	600	712	755
Percent attending school	89.8	97.8	95.2
Persons 16 and 17 years	644	670	827
Number attending school	350	485	672
Percent attending school	54.3	72.4	81.3
Persons 18 to 20 years inclusive	884	880	929
Number attending school	170	234	265
Percent attending school	19.2	26.6	28.5

Source: U.S. Census of Population

The 1920s in Rushville—Billy Brown, Olive Logan, Miriam Hunt, Virginia Carter, Eleanor Lambert, and Viola Jay (l. to r.)

outnumber boys in the total population, the ratio of boys to girls graduating from high school also increased. A county-wide study done in 1921 revealed that for the previous ten years 25 percent more girls than boys graduated from high school.[22] In 1920, out of the 37 seniors who graduated from Rushville High School, only 7 were boys.[23] In 1927, 56 students graduated from high school in Rushville with the ratio almost equally divided, 27 boys and 29 girls. The Depression cut into school enrollment, as shown in Table 2; nevertheless, in 1939, 93 seniors graduated from Rushville High School, of whom 53 were boys and 40 girls.[24] In 1921, 14 graduates out of a class of 37 went on to advanced education in business and vocational schools, or to colleges and universities. In 1929 almost one third of the senior class (20 of 63) went on to advanced education. The Depression cut into the ranks of those choosing higher education but, by 1940, 30 seniors at Rushville High School chose to continue their education.[25]

While change affected the lives of virtually everyone living in the county, it was felt most strongly in the towns and cities—especially Rushville. The population of the county seat exceeded 5,000 persons by 1920, and its growth continued during the 1920s and 1930s, reaching almost 6,000 by 1940.[26] With a growing urban population, increased demands were put on the city for expansion of existing facilities and services and for adoption of new ones. The city already provided municipal facilities and services, including a water and light plant, police and fire protection, a public library, parks, schools, streets and alleys, a private hospital, and a telephone exchange.[27] The services provided, however, were found to be inadequate for the demands of modern urban living.

The automobile that helped bring improved surfaces to county roads and city streets and increased mobility for county residents also made life more hazardous. Oil applied to streets to keep the dust down produced automobile accidents—some funny and others more serious. The Milroy *Press* reported that "Automobiles coming into town at a fair speed would hit the slick street, do an ocean wave, a loop the loop, a tail spin and land in the gutter. Out of the dozens of such maneuvers, only one resulted in serious damage." In Rushville wrecks and accidents reported during 1928 totalled 144. Thereafter, though the number declined somewhat during the Depression, traffic accidents led all other statistics in annual police reports. Though most of these accidents involved collision with other automobiles, more than a few occurred with trains. As early as 1922 the Rushville city council approved watchmen at railroad crossings, and flashing light signals to provide twenty-four hour protection at crossings were proposed as early as 1926. Even with such protection, four automobiles were struck by trains in 1938.[28]

Personal injuries at first involved mainly drivers themselves. When motorists tried to revive engines that "died" on city streets, the "kick" from hand cranking often sent them to the doctor with a broken arm. As the number of automobiles increased, pedestrians more and more became the victims. Children who unthinkingly darted into the street in front of moving automobiles were particularly susceptible to the new danger. By the 1930s pedestrian injuries had become common on Rushville streets, and seldom a year went by when fewer than two were killed. Reckless and drunken driving and speeding accounted for most injuries. In 1931, even before the end of

[22] *Ibid.*, December 8, 1921.

[23] *Ibid.*, May 14, 1920.

[24] *The Holcad*, 1927, 1939.

[25] Rushville *Republican*, August 26, 1921, June 22, 1929, September 3, 1932, September 28, 1940; *Rushville School Building Survey* (Bureau of Cooperative Research and Field Service, School of Education, Indiana University, July, 1945), p. 43. This is a report prepared for the Rushville Board of School Trustees by the Bureau.

[26] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), III, *Population . . . by States*, p. 302; *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Population*, II, Pt. 2, p. 783.

[27] *Rushville City Directory*, 1921.

[28] Milroy *Press*, July 1, 1920; Rushville *Republican*, January 1, 1929, August 18, 1926, January 4, 1939.

prohibition, there were six arrests for driving a motor vehicle while intoxicated. At least one driver who showed such disregard for his fellow citizens received thirty days on the penal farm and was fined $10 and costs. The practice of speeding on the streets of Rushville and failure on the part of the motorists to obey "stop" signs was described by the *Republican* as a serious "menace to public safety."[29]

Although the city council passed its first traffic ordinance for the safe use of automobiles in the city in 1918, initial enforcement proved difficult. In 1920 concerned citizens urged strict enforcement of "the automobile laws, and especially the laws regarding speeding and head lights." The use of headlights proved particularly hazardous because many motorists drove with "bright, blinding lights." The police could not catch speeders since the motorcycle they used had a side car attachment that made it "impossible to overtake a speeding automobile."[30] The purchase of a new police car, the installation of electric stop and go signals, stop signs, and other traffic signs, as well as instruction in hand signaling, lessened, but did not eliminate, the problem. New ordinances passed in 1928 and 1930 further sought to control the use of the automobile, but the state highway commission in 1935 threatened to reroute the three state roads around Rushville if traffic could not be better controlled.[31]

One of the city's most pressing needs related to public health. Ruth Gronier, a visiting nurse, told a meeting of the Rotary Club in 1920 that "a garbage collection system was the greatest need in Rushville at present because so many people empty their garbage near their homes and produce unsanitary conditions."[32] The city council wasted little time confronting the problem. In June the council designated a city health inspector whom they ordered to identify and clean up any unsanitary conditions existing in alleys and back yards. The first city garbage collection began in February, 1921, when the council accepted the proposal of an Anderson farmer who offered to make collections free of charge because he could use the garbage to feed his hogs. This solution proved inadequate, and in June the council signed a contract for regular collection of garbage twice a week during the summer months. In 1927 collection was initiated on a year round basis. The city council acted to protect public health in general in 1922 with the passage of an ordinance providing that "animal manure must be securely protected from flies; that filthy or littered cellars, houses, lots[,] yards, etc, must be kept clean; vaults, pits, and other places which breed flies must be protected; garbage must be contained in metal receptacles, and not wooden buckets; [and] trash, litter and other accumulations which might cause a fire hazard, must be abolished."[33] The community could no longer tolerate such hazardous practices.

When local organizations, groups, and citizens launched a drive to secure a county hospital, the project went ahead with equal determination. As an interim measure, the city council in July, 1928, voted unanimously to purchase Sexton Hospital for $11,000.[34] In deciding to make the purchase, however, the councilmen all stated that they were heartily in favor of a county hospital; they had purchased the Sexton Hospital only as a means of bridging over the period of time that would be necessary to develop a county facility. The period of time proved longer than the council anticipated for in a special county-wide referendum

[29]Rushville *Republican*, December 19, 1925, April 2, 1927, January 4, 1932, October 24, 1927, October 19, 1937.

[30]*Ibid.*, June 2, 1920.

[31]*Ibid.*, August 3, 1926, April 20, June 11, 1927, July 25, 30, 1928, April 16, 1930, June 5, 1935.

[32]*Ibid.*, January 22, 1920.

[33]*Ibid.*, June 2, 1920, February 2, June 8, 1921, September 16, 1927, May 3, 1922.

[34]Dr. John Chase Sexton in 1892 built Rushville's first hospital on a lot on Fifth Street adjacent to his home at the corner of Fifth and Main streets. He razed this small private hospital in 1902 and replaced it with one designed as a surgical hospital by a New York City architect. When Sexton retired in 1929, it was this hospital that was sold to the city of Rushville. Jean Green, "Hospitals in Rush County," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History, 1822-1972* (Shelbyville, Ind., n.d.), p. 74; Rushville *Republican*, July 5, 1928.

on the project voters turned the project down by a margin of almost two to one. Even as the returns began to come in, it was clear that Rushville gave the hospital a heavy majority while the rest of the county voted heavily against it. This division duplicated a similar effort in 1919.[35]

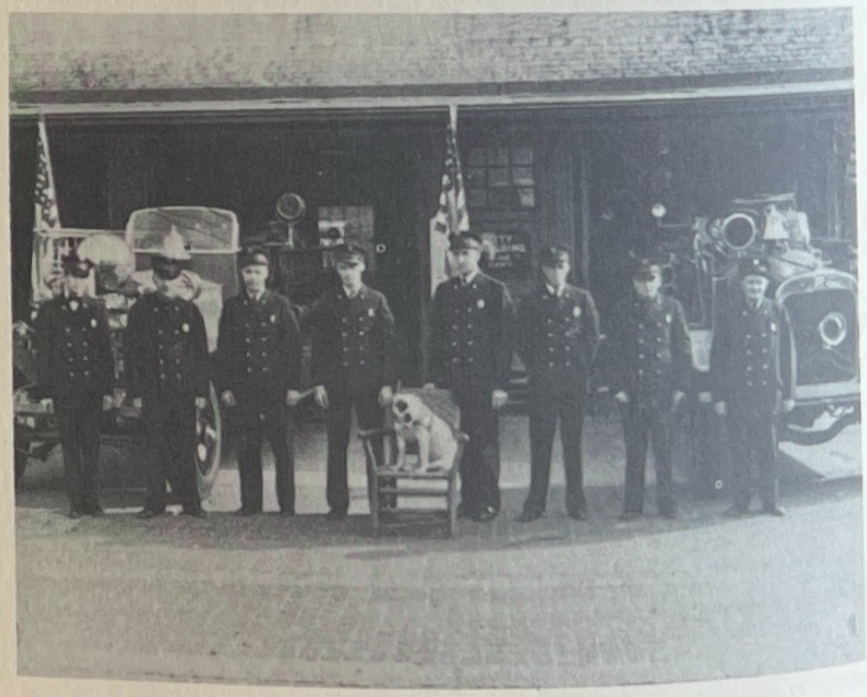
The city assumed control of Sexton Hospital on the first of January, 1929, renaming it City Hospital, and began immediately to modernize and update the facility. In its first year of operation the hospital cared for 139 patients but operated at a loss of about $8,000. The second year saw no increase in patient use; in fact, only 125 patients were treated. The first year deficit was sharply reduced, however, by cutting down on expenditures and increasing fees. The hospital raised patient fees to $5 a day for room care with an additional charge of from $5 to $10 for use of the operating room. Fee increases did not eliminate deficits, and throughout the thirties expenses annually exceeded income. By 1940, though patient use had increased to 305 with stays averaging five and a half days per patient, the hospital had over a $2,000 deficit for the year.[36]

City services related to safety were improved and modernized nearly as rapidly as those related to health. As Rushville grew, congestion increased the risk of fire. The fire loss during 1920, when a total of $165,667 in property was destroyed, broke all records for previous years. To fight fires, the city had a full-time, five-man fire department housed in City Hall on West Third Street. Every fireman was on duty all the time with the exception of one day off each week. The department included a chief, assistant chief, and three firemen. Equipment included a flat bed truck, a pumping engine, a Ford chemical truck purchased about 1918 (which was the first motorized equipment), a team of horses and a horse wagon, two 500 foot reels of cotton rubber-lined hose, and an Ahrens-Fox steam pumper purchased

[35]Rushville *Republican*, July 3, 5, 31, September 14, 19, 1928.

[36]*Ibid.*, January 28, December 31, 1929, January 22, 1931, January 3, 1940; Rush County Council Record, No. 16, p. 1336, located in Rush County Courthouse.

The last horse drawn pumper in Rushville, 1920s.



The Rushville Fire Department in front of old City Hall, 1940s.

in 1881 and held in reserve. One hundred twenty-six fire hydrants, installed in 1896, were located throughout the city. In addition, twenty-three fire alarm boxes, installed about 1892, were conveniently located throughout the city. The old alarm bell, first used in 1874, was mounted on the roof of City Hall more for nostalgic reasons than for emergency use.[37]

One of the first improvements in fire protection came with the standardization of fire hose and hydrant couplings. A new pumper was purchased in 1921, and in 1922 a modern $12,000 Seagrave fire truck was added. The unit consisted of a hose and ladder truck, a large chemical apparatus, and an engine capable of throwing 500 gallons of water a minute. The destruction of the three story Odd Fellows Building with an estimated loss of $160,000 in 1924 convinced city fathers of the need for an aerial truck. The new truck had a 75 foot ladder unit of the most modern design. The Rushville fire department retained its horses and horse-drawn equipment until 1925 when a modern $13,000 Ahrens-Fox pumper was purchased. According to the *Republican*, the Rushville fire department was the last in the state to give up its horses. The new pumper complemented the Seagrave pumper, and by 1925 the department was giving the community up-to-date fire protection.[38]

The effectiveness of the modernization of the fire department can be measured by the dramatic decline in fire losses. In the first six months of 1926, losses amounted to $11,700 while in 1927 they amounted to only $7,869 for the whole year. Although fire losses for both 1930 and 1931 reached $70,000 annually, the average annual fire loss from 1926 to 1939 seldom reached $10,000. In 1939, for example, fire loss including both buildings and contents amounted to only $1,015. Fire protection in that year cost the citizens of Rushville $13,926 in expenditures for the operation of the department.[39]

City fathers dealt less effectively with the problem of crime than they did with that of fire. A patrolman on the police force in 1920, and thus in a position to know, later recalled that Rushville was "a volcano." "We had everything Chicago had," he said, "but on a smaller scale." This may be hyperbole, but increasingly after 1920 lawlessness became a part of life in Rushville. In January, 1922, the *Republican* published an editorial entitled "Lawlessness" which declared that a "general wave of crime" had been noticeable since the war, but that it would pass with the coming of better times. Whether Rushville was "Chicago on a smaller scale" or not, it had many crimes associated with urbanization. Prostitution, gambling, arson, embezzlement, forgery, assault, murder, thievery, and violations of prohibition were increasingly a part of life. In 1922 the police investigated 103 crimes and made 33 arrests. By 1929 the department made 1,187 investigations of crimes and 76 arrests, the latter a 130 percent increase over 1922. The annual police reports in the 1930s ceased to report the number of investigations, but crime does not appear to have decreased during the Depression years. In 1939 the annual report showed 113 arrests, a 49 percent increase over 1929.[40]

Crime ranged from the bizarre (a young man who rode around town nude) to murder, but possession of alcohol, drunkenness, and theft were probably the most common causes for arrest in the 1920s. Most arrests for prohibition violations resulted from possession of from one to several quarts. In at least one instance, however, facilities for making 3,000 gallons of beer were confiscated from a residence at Fifth and Perkins streets.

[37]Rushville *Republican*, January 21, 1921, April 15, 1922.

[38]*Ibid.*, July 28, 1921, April 12, 1922, January 25, 1924, January 10, 1925; Rush County File, Federal Writers Project (WPA), Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute.

[39]Rushville *Republican*, July 2, 1927, January 5, 1928, January 2, 1932, January 4, 1940, September 2, 1939; City of Rushville, Ordinance Record Book, No. 3, October 17, 1933, to July 11, 1961, pp. 128-29, City Treasurer's Office, City Hall.

[40]Charles Pea Oral History Tape, September 9, 1972, in Rushville Public Library; Rushville *Republican*, January 6, 1922, January 4, 1921, December 31, 1929, January 3, 1940.

Thievery varied from petty theft to armed robbery, but as the decade progressed automobile theft became more and more common. In 1927 a total of thirty-five local cars were stolen. One was a two-door Ford sedan belonging to Judge Will M. Sparks that was stolen from the garage at the rear of his residence. In reporting the incident, the *Republican* observed that "Judge Sparks has lost several machines by robberies in recent years." Local police declared in 1929 that car stealing had reached epidemic proportions.[41]

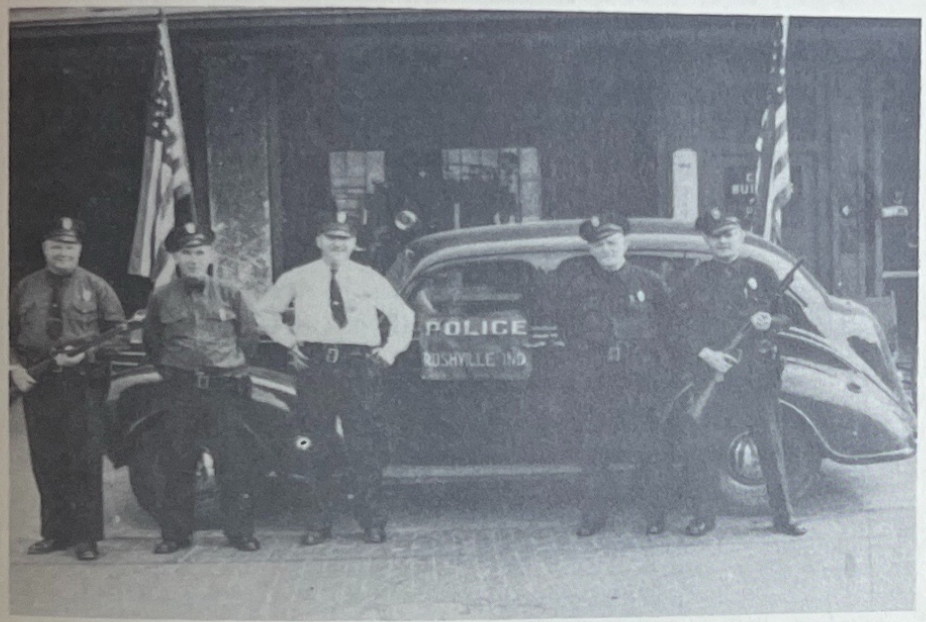
In April, 1933, the city council repealed the local ordinances that had enforced the Eighteenth Amendment, and by so doing abolished a broad area of crime. The end of prohibition, however, increased drunkenness and particularly driving while intoxicated. During the 1930s, while bootlegging virtually disappeared and automobile theft declined, gambling and petty larceny, both reflecting the impact of the Depression, increased. Slot machines, punchboards, and marble machines were popular, but illegal, gambling devices. The situation became so bad by 1937 that the county prosecuting attorney threatened a "crusade to remove gambling" from Rushville. Many parents complained that their children lost money in the marble machines, and wives complained that husbands lost their money at other and "heavier" forms of gambling. Gambling also attracted men and boys who loitered in front of local taverns, especially on Saturday night, making it difficult for townspeople to use the sidewalks.[42]

As the Depression deepened, theft of necessities became more common. Thieves stole meat, milk, vegetables, and other foods from back porch iceboxes. No one was immune from the assault of the petty thief; even the mayor had a veal roast stolen from his front porch while on a personal mission to bring relief to the poor. An enterprising group of thieves used a homemade

[41]Rushville *Republican*, July 28, 1923, November 25, 1931, October 10, 1927, January 2, 1928, March 1, 1929.

[42]*Ibid.*, April 5, 1933, October 4, 1937.

Orie Blackburn, Rushville chief of police, with the largest still captured in Rush County in 1923 in Walker Township.



The Rushville Police Department, ca. 1940.

The Rushville Police Department, ca. 1949.

cart equipped with automobile tires to carry away several hundred pounds of coal at a time from Big Four railroad cars. In one day the railroad lost nearly two tons of coal. Though the thieves were in "impoverished circumstances," when apprehended they received penal farm sentences.[43]

Given the scope, if not the depth, of crime in Rushville, it is strange that expansion of police protection developed more slowly than fire protection. In 1920 the police department was composed of a chief, a patrolman, and a merchant police officer. The patrolman received $85 a month and the chief $90. Given the relatively low pay, it is not surprising that few standards were employed in the selection of officers. The police chief in 1920 was tried for an unjustified assault on a man with his night stick. In 1922 a patrolman, though charged with assault and battery for which he was later found guilty, remained on the force until he was forced to resign for firing his service revolver in anger through the floor of a restaurant. These unfortunate examples of a lack of standards were by no means representative of the typical officer; most served with honor, accepting the hazards of their job willingly. In 1922, and again in 1931, officers were shot and killed in the line of duty.[44]

In 1920 the city provided the department with its first motorized vehicle, a motorcycle with a side car, to apprehend speeders. In the same year officers began to wear regular uniforms with "new hats, wreaths, brass buttons 'n everything." As crime increased, the department was equipped with a fingerprint machine, and an arson squad was established composed of the police and fire chiefs. In 1928 the city replaced the department's motorcycle with a "fully equipped" police car. An additional patrolman was not added to the force until 1929, and at the beginning of the Depression decade the city was expending $5,000 a year for police protection, or less than half

[43] *Ibid.*, August 9, September 30, 1933.

[44] *Rushville City Directory*, 1921; Rushville *Republican*, November 17, March 20, June 16, 1920, October 23, December 13, February 8, 1922, February 18, 1931.

of what was provided for fire protection. The shooting death of a police officer in 1931 prompted the city to give more protection to its officers by purchasing two bulletproof vests and two riot guns. Two additional patrolmen were added to the force during the 1930s, so that by the end of the decade the department included a chief, four patrolmen, and a merchant policeman.[45]

One of the services of which the city was proudest was offered by its water and light plant. In 1892 the city first provided electrical current for fifty-eight street lights from a generator located on West Market Street. Eventually home lighting was connected with the street light system, but it could only be used when the street lights were turned on. The city did not inaugurate day current until 1910, when separate public and private circuits were established and individual meters installed. In 1894 a water well was sunk near the light plant and two years later began providing water to sixty-five fire hydrants located throughout the city. In 1910, when the water and light plant began providing day current, it also began providing water to individual homes on a metered basis.[46]

In 1920 city residents paid the lowest minimum water rate of any city in Indiana, and one of the lowest electric power rates. The water rate was a minimum of $1 for three months, or $4 a year; the electric rate was competitive with nearby communities. At that time only two main feeder lines ran from the electric plant. One went up Second Street to the business district supplying the southern part of the city. The other ran north on Arthur Street furnishing current to the factories and residences of the northern section. A third line erected in 1920 ran northeast to Eleventh Street to provide current for residents in that part of the city. By relieving the demand on the other two lines, this new line increased voltage in the factory and business districts.[47]

In the summer of 1925 many privately owned water wells in Rushville went dry, causing water famine. Among them was the large well at the Innis, Pearce and Company furniture factory, and all of the water, not only for the factory engines and equipment, but also for the manufacture of ice, had to come from the city water supply. The famine created an enormous drain on the city water system. Faced with the risk that under such circumstance a major fire might well produce a disaster, the city council moved immediately to locate a fifty-inch well in Memorial Park, near Twelfth Street. Engineers created a vast reservoir beneath the ground that stored 600,000 gallons of water, which was more than the existing plant's daily capacity. Instead of piping the water from the underground reservoir at the park to the city reservoir, the engineers installed equipment on the grounds to furnish pressure that sent the water directly into the main water lines. An automatic control device increased pressure in case of fire. The new well proved to be a gusher, but in 1929 its productivity suddenly dropped from 600 gallons of water a minute to 200 gallons a day. At that time a new well was sunk south of the old one in Memorial Park, and the city ceased to have water problems. During the Depression water was about the cheapest thing one could buy. By then the rate had become 65 cents a month, but it gave a family 10.2 tons of water.[48]

Modern living that depended on up-to-date appliances created new demands for electric current. In response, in 1926, the city installed a new generator that doubled the capacity of the light plant to produce electricity. The following year a new stoker and boiler were installed along with a 750 kilowatt steam turbine generator that supplemented the older engine-type power

[45]Rushville *Republican*, April 10, 1920; *Rushville City Directory*, 1929; Rushville *Republican*, August 6, September 14, 1927, February 22, 1928, April 21, 1931; *Rushville City Directory*, 1939.

[46]Rushville *Republican*, April 23, 1929, October 22, 1940.

[47]*Ibid.*, August 18, 1920. "The present electric power rate is said to be too low, as at present it is two cents a kilowatt. The consumer rate is ten cents here, as against 12 1/2 cents in Connersville . . . ." *Ibid.*, April 7, 1920.

[48]*Ibid.*, September 16, 1925, May 8, 1926, July 12, 1929, December 2, 1940.

generators. At the time it was believed this would satisfy electrical needs for ten years. Demand increased so rapidly, however, that by 1929 a new Westinghouse turbine and boiler capable of producing 1,500 kilowatts had to be installed, giving the city a total capacity of 2,825 kilowatts. The new unit was expected to prove adequate to demands for a minimum of five years. By this time the city's original investment of $13,000 in 1892 had grown to $780,000. Further improvement in the plant in 1938, including the erection of a 175-foot chimney, at a total cost of $210,000, gave Rushville a million-dollar facility for the production of electrical current.[49]

In 1929 the light plant provided electricity for 491 street lamps and 92 percent of the city's houses, as well as electricity for its businesses and industries. The plant had improved its efficiency so much that a reduction in rates was put into effect that allowed a 10 percent discount on light bills and a further 5 percent discount providing bills were paid promptly each month. Best estimates at the time indicated that in a few years the plant would be in a position to pay big dividends, which would reduce the tax levy and still further reduce consumer rates. In the 1930s consumer rates were further reduced, but other benefits were not realized because of the Depression. Although the water and light plant was debt free by 1933, its surpluses had to be transferred to the general fund in order to assist the city in its unemployment relief programs. In 1935 only thirty-one houses in Rushville had electric ranges; by 1940 that number had grown to over 200, more than a 500 percent increase. Similar increases occurred in the use of refrigerators, radios, irons, water heaters, and other electrical appliances. By the end of the decade use of inexpensive electrical energy had become as much a part of rural as of urban living.[50]

[49] *Ibid.*, May 21, 1926, November 16, 1927, January 24, April 23, 1929, December 30, 1938, July 16, 1940.

[50] *Ibid.*, April 23, 1929, January 10, 1934, July 16, 1940.

The city did not provide the leisure services associated with modern living nearly as readily as it did essential services. In 1920 a Chicago firm of landscape architects submitted plans to the city for a modern park. The plans called for paved driveways, an open air theater, athletic field, swimming pools, wading pools, an artificial lake, children's playground, flower beds, bandstands, tennis courts, a building for exhibits and indoor entertainments, and a "copious" wooded area for picnics and family reunions. The city council quickly rejected the expensive proposal, but enthusiasm for aspects of it remained, particularly for enlargement of City Park and the building of a city swimming pool.[51]

Civic leaders and service clubs backed a movement for the beautification of City Park that led to the formation of a park board in 1922. The following year the city purchased a thirty-five acre addition to City Park on North Harrison; the enlarged facility was renamed Memorial Park. Construction of Memorial Park Boulevard, which extended for a half mile around the park, from the north end of Jackson Street to a point near Sixteenth Street on North Main, began almost immediately. But further expansion of the park lapsed. The city council did offer to provide $300 to purchase lumber for a bandstand provided civic and fraternal organizations would guarantee it would be built. Despite its arrested development, literally thousands thronged to the park annually to enjoy its natural beauty and participate in community festivities. The Fourth of July observance at the park in 1926 attracted an estimated ten to fifteen thousand visitors whose parked automobiles stretched for a half mile in every direction.[52]

Each summer agitation arose for a swimming pool, but invariably each summer passed without anything being done. One reason the project never got off the ground was past experience. Money had been spent once in building a bathhouse

[51] *Ibid.*, August 10, 1920.

[52] *Ibid.*, February 8, 1922, December 4, 1923, July 12, 1924, July 6, 1926.

and diving board along the Flat Rock River near the old country club; the expenditure was wasted, however, when a flood washed the facility completely away. It was not until 1937, when the memory of this wasted money had dimmed sufficiently, that the city council granted approval for the building of a swimming pool in Memorial Park. The pool was to be located in the extreme northern portion of the park, east of the Boy Scout cabin, and was to be 160 feet in diameter surrounded by a 25 foot skirt of sand. The cost was not to exceed $67,000, which was to be partially underwritten by WPA labor. When the WPA withheld support because there was not enough unemployed, unskilled labor in the area, the project died.[53] Talk of a municipal swimming pool flared up and died annually until 1939, when a referendum on the issue indicated that Rushville residents, by a margin of almost 40 to 1 (1,206 to 33), favored having a pool. In light of this clear mandate the city council, in November, 1939, voted to have an Indianapolis promoter submit a proposal for the construction of a pool. After over twenty years, the project appeared on the verge of reality.[54] Unfortunately, it took almost as long to raise the funds for the project as it had to overcome public apathy. Almost another twenty years elapsed before a pool was actually constructed.

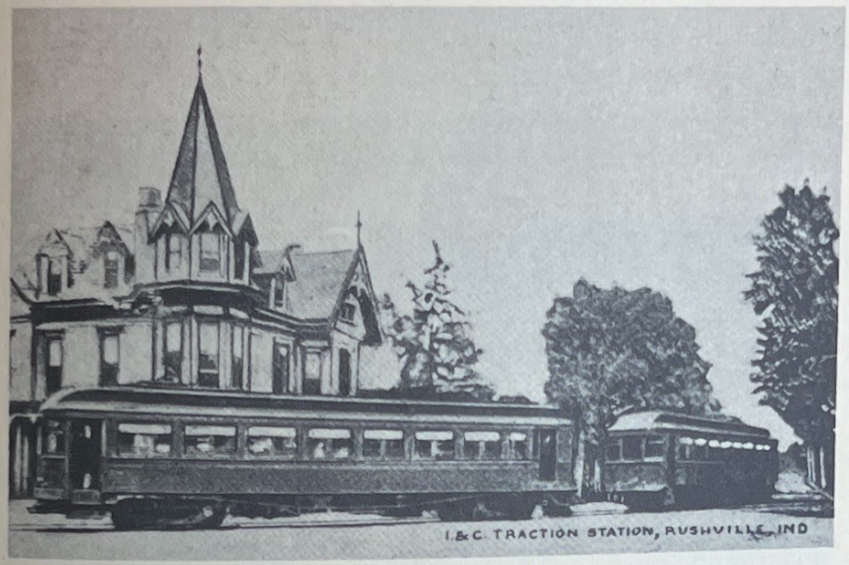
Faced with such dilatory official response, it is not surprising that enthusiasts for other leisure time facilities sought their establishment through private initiative. Although public agitation for a school gymnasium arose at about the same time as did interest in a swimming pool, the former became a reality much more quickly. Rather than build it with public funds, supporters of the project sought to fund the cost through public subscription of non-interest bearing loans repayable in ten years. A Rushville Athletic Corporation was formed, and 140 concerned citizens loaned the corporation $27,050 with which its board of directors was able to borrow the remaining money necessary to build the $77,000 gymnasium. The new high school gymnasium formally opened on February 5, 1926, with a basketball game between Greensburg and Rushville high schools. The project moved from planning to completion in less than five years.[55]

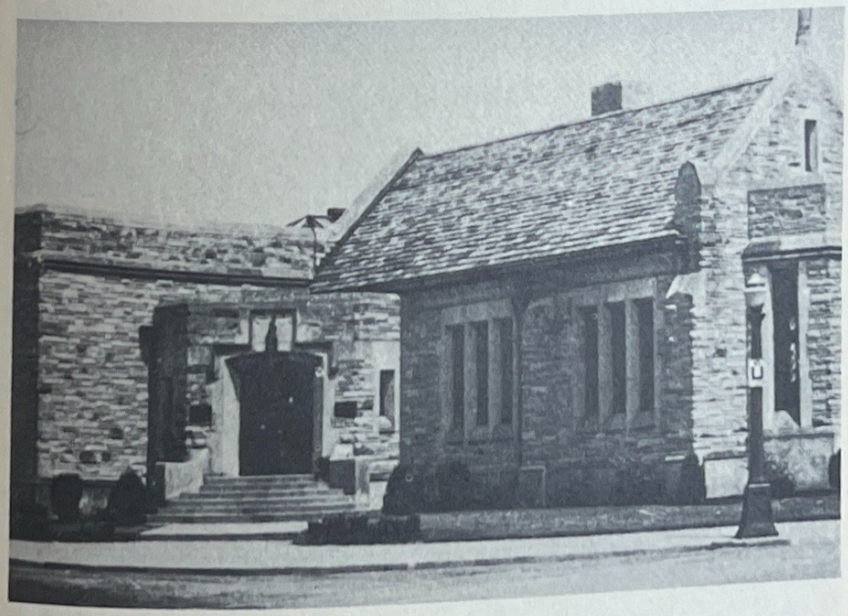
The building of a new city library involved a combination of public and private funding and cooperation. A city library had been established on the main floor of the county courthouse in 1910. It remained in the three rooms granted by the county commissioners until 1931 when it was moved into a building specifically built for the Rushville Public Library. The circumstances surrounding the building of the new library began in 1927 when the Rushville library board received a check for $22,500 from the estate of Sarah Mull Banning to be expended within a reasonable time for the purchase of real estate or property to be used by the library. In the event the money was not used for that purpose, it was to revert to the estate and become the property of the First Presbyterian Church of Rushville and the Second Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis. Spurred by such a proviso, the board purchased, in 1928, the depot of the I & C Traction Line that was then suffering financial difficulties and was in the hands of a receiver. The old depot was purchased for $10,000, and in 1929 the city council authorized a $20,000 bond issue to complete the building of the library. The board employed the firm of McGuire and Shook of Indianapolis to design a beautiful little Gothic building constructed of Bedford limestone. In August, 1930, builders laid the cornerstone and on January 16, 1931, the library formally opened. Rushville residents quickly took advantage of the services of their new library. When in the courthouse, library circulation had averaged about 34,000 volumes a year; in the

[53] *Ibid.*, July 11, 1921, February 2, 1922, July 26, 1932, May 5, September 21, 1937.

[54] *Ibid.*, November 29, 1939. For a more detailed account of the swimming pool story, see the Epilogue.

[55] *Ibid.*, March 22, 1922, April 6, 1925, February 5, March 12, November 10, 1926; *The Holcad*, 1926; Rushville *Republican*, December 15, 1938.





The Rushville Public Library was built on the site of the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Traction station, shown above from an early postcard.

new facility annual circulation increased to over 62,000 volumes by 1933.[56]

The residents of Rush County in 1940 lived in a world much different from that of a generation earlier. Gone, perhaps forever, was the simpler, less complicated life of the past. The covered bridge and its fate perhaps best symbolizes the change. For an earlier generation these bridges were more than paths over nature's obstacles. They were works of art fashioned by the hands of craftsmen who took pride and pleasure in their work. For the traveler they offered havens from the sudden thunderstorms of summer and the cold winds of winter; for young lovers, escape from prying eyes; for the weary, shelter; and for all, the marvelous images formed by the sunlight of day and the moonlight of night passing through their weathered sides and dancing on the angles of their struts and beams. Perhaps most of all the bridges reflected the unhurried, leisurely pace of a horse and buggy age.

In Rush County the foremost covered bridge builders were the Archibald M. Kennedy family. Over a period of some sixty years, three generations of Kennedys had built approximately fifty covered bridges in central and southern Indiana, the last one in 1918. When construction began in 1928 on the southern portion of U.S. Route 52, the Kennedy bridge over the Flat Rock River at the south edge of Rushville was restored and made part of the national highway system. Built in 1883 by A.M. Kennedy & Son, the bridge had Burr truss construction, and was made of Michigan white pine in two spans, each 120 feet in length. It had a sixteen foot roadway with a five foot walkway on each side and sixteen feet of overhead clearance.[57]

By 1940 local interests began petitioning the state highway commission to replace the old covered bridge with a modern

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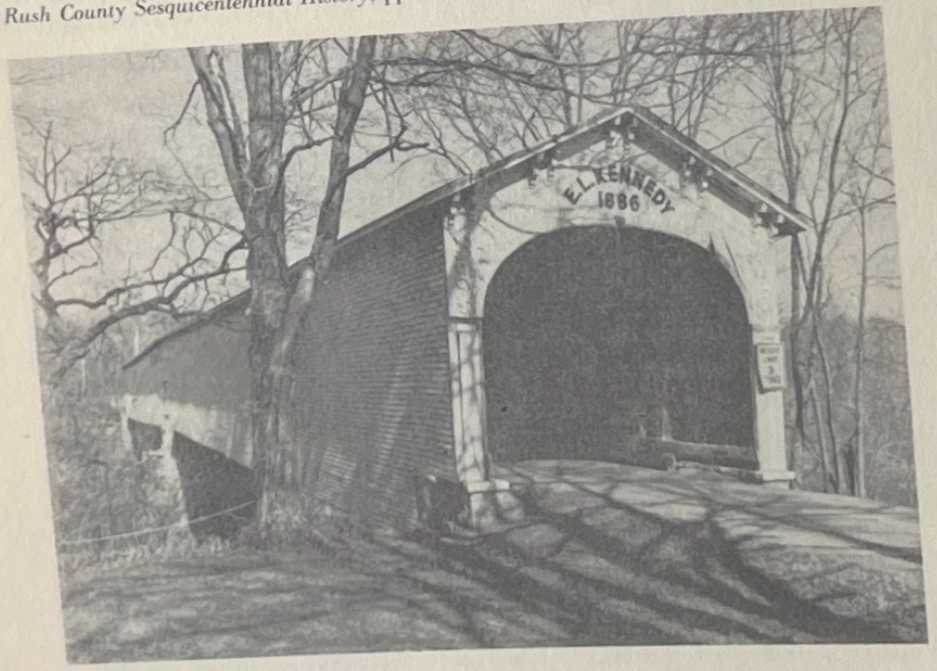
[56]Rushville *Republican*, September 19, 22, 1927, October 6, 1928, September 4, 1929, August 23, 1930, January 16, 1931, February 1, August 17, 1933; Nancy Waggener Oster, "Rushville Public Library," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History*, pp. 40-43.

[57]Rushville *Republican*, January 28, 1929.

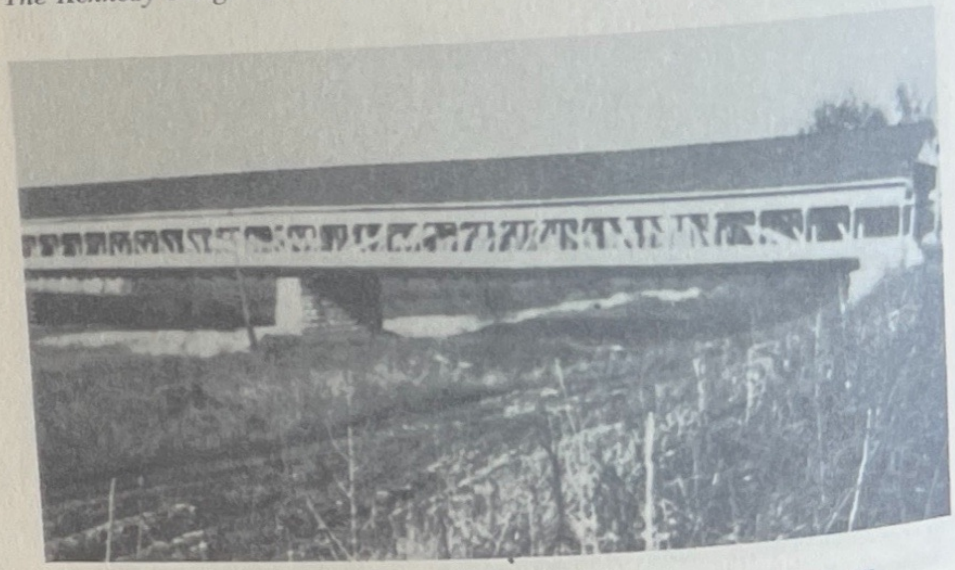
bridge that would more adequately serve the needs of the community. Construction of a new five span bridge, 300 feet long with a twenty-eight foot roadway and pedestrian walks began in April, 1941, and was opened to traffic the following November. Some in the community sought to preserve the old bridge as a "Rush County relic," but in 1948 the Rush County Historical Society reluctantly decided to abandon the bridge to its fate. The following year, while workmen were in the process of demolishing the structure, its rotted timbers gave way and the old bridge collapsed into the Flat Rock River. Ten years earlier, as agitation for a new bridge was growing, Emmett L. Kennedy, one of the builders of the covered structure, died at age ninety. Both he and his handiwork had fulfilled their allotted time.[58]

[58] *Ibid.*, January 11, 1940, February 13, April 15, November 20, 1941, September 28, 1948, May 24, 1949; Mildred McMillin Benson, "The Bridge-Building Kennedys," in *Rush County Sesquicentennial History*, pp. 32-34.



The Kennedy bridge at Moscow, west entrance, north side.

The Kennedy bridge at East Hill Cemetery, Rushville.



The Kennedy bridge over Flat Rock River, South Main Street, Rushville.

A cooking school at the Princess Theater draws a large crowd in March, 1941.

Chapter 4

More Is Not Necessarily Better

World War II and the postwar years accelerated the changes in Rush County that had begun in the 1920s and 1930s by drawing the county headlong into the mainstream of the national experience. Changes that might previously have taken a decade or more to fully develop now occurred seemingly overnight. Research science discovered the bactericidal effect of penicillin in 1941, streptomycin in 1945, aureomycin in 1948, terramycin in 1950, isoniazid for tuberculosis in 1952, and the Salk and Sabin vaccines against polio in 1953 and 1955. The wonder drug penicillin was available in Rush County on a limited basis during the war and became commercially available in March, 1945. The infection fighting drugs discovered after the war became commercially available even more quickly. In April, 1955, the county began large scale innoculation for polio when almost a thousand first and second grade youngsters received their first shots of the Salk vaccine. The effect on parents of the subsequent virtual disappearance of this annual summertime scourge is hardly imaginable today. Dr. Wyndham H. Nutter, recalling the use of the Salk vaccine and other new drugs introduced into the county in the postwar years, said their effect "was a miracle, and I was a miracle man, which is pretty nice."[1]

The war years that began the rush of science and technology into the county also carried its residents outward in ever increasing numbers. Many of the older people took jobs in defense plants in Connersville, New Castle, and Indianapolis. Many of the younger people joined others from all over the nation to serve their country at home and abroad. The flow of Rush County's young men to the armed services began on

[1]Rushville *Republican*, March 10, 1945, April 18, 1955; typescript of panel discussion on "Medicine and Health Care in the 1940s and 1950s," November 2, 1979, p. 29, in Rushville Public Library.

February 1, 1941, when twenty-one draftees departed from Rushville for Fort Knox, Kentucky.[2] The trickle swelled to a flood after Pearl Harbor, and the most popular question of the day became "How soon's the draft goin' to getcha?"[3] Many volunteered instead of waiting for the draft, and before it was over 2,033 sons, husbands, and fathers, had answered the call.[4] They served and died in all American theaters of the war. They fought the Japanese in the Philippines and the Germans in North Africa; they flew bombing raids over Hitler's Europe, and a young man from Rushville, Sergeant William Goodson, commanded the first tank to cross the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany, in 1945.[5] Some languished in German and Japanese prison camps, and fifty-two gave their lives for their country. One of the first to die was a young Rushville man, Walter Floyd, who had joined the Canadian Army and was killed on a commando raid in Dieppe, France, in 1942.[6]

At home the families of servicemen and others made their own sacrifices and began the process of coping with shortages. The county established a ration board and began the rationing of sugar, coffee, and tires early in 1942. By May ration books and coupons had become a center of community attention. The Office of Price Administration (OPA) placed a price ceiling on all retail merchandise, and from that time on a retail merchant could charge no more for consumer products than the highest price charged the previous March. In October, in order to conserve rubber and transportation facilities, the national government placed a speed limit of 35 miles an hour on all privately owned automobiles. Gas rationing went into effect in November to further conserve tires and transportation equipment. By the end of the year residents of the county were relearning their ABCs: an A Book was for personal driving; a B Book for occupational driving; a C Book for exceptional driving; a T Book for truck owners; a D Book for motorcycles; and E and R Books for non-highway users.[7]

In February, 1943, "point rationing" began. The "point" method had developed in wartime Europe, and under it virtually all canned and processed goods were rationed on a point basis. Under this system each commodity had a point value and similar commodities could be substituted for one another. The purpose of the system was to discourage overbuying of scarcer and more popular items and encourage consumption of more plentiful ones. The scarcer the item the higher its point value, the more plentiful the item the lower its point value. To further add to the complexity of the point system, the OPA could change the point value of various commodities from time to time, but ordinarily not more frequently than once a month. Ration Book 2 contained the commodity points and joined the earlier ration books in that special place in the home reserved for valuables.[8]

The ration board and ration book represented a needed but resented intrusion of the national government into the local community; tolerated during the war, its lingering on after the conflict provoked hostility. An editorial in the Rushville *Republican* characterized postwar rationing and price controls as "symbols of totalitarian reaction" and called for a return to the "law of supply and demand."[9] The abandonment of most wartime restrictions on consumer goods on July 1, 1946, brought a sigh of relief from many. The Chamber of Commerce sought to stem the

[2]Rushville *Republican*, January 10, February 1, 1941.

[3]*Ibid.*, September 30, 1942.

[4]Memorial Honor Roll, Rush County Courthouse. Seventeen county women served in the armed forces. One of the first to join was a Rushville High School teacher of mathematics and English, Ruth S. Reece. She enlisted in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAACs) in 1942 and received a commission as a WAAC lieutenant in 1943. Rushville *Republican*, July 10, 1942, March 31, 1943.

[5]*Ibid.*, March 10, 14, 1945.

[6]*Ibid.*, August 24, September 29, 1942, July 27, 1943, June 1, 1945.

[7]*Ibid.*, May 18, June 25, September 16, September 1, October 1, 1942, January 13, 1943.

[8]*Ibid.*, January 2, February 17, 1943.

[9]*Ibid.*, June 18, 1946.

Rationing

As a home economics teacher during World War II, I was asked to speak to the local Kiwanis club concerning nutrition and rationing. The members asked questions about meatless days (which most of us took care of by eating poultry or fish) and about coffee usage. The limit at that time was one pound every five weeks for all over fifteen years of age. Most of us used coffee grounds more than one time, and some persons added ground chicory or ground roasted wheat to stretch the coffee.

We saved used fats such as bacon drippings to be taken to the collection center where we believed it would be collected and recycled into gun powder. Our cakes were fat and sugar free, and many new recipes were developed with or without the use of lard and with syrup as a sugar replacement.

Shopping was very tedious and required much advance planning. Our meat coupons were spent for as much meat with as little bone as possible. Canned fruits and vegetables were rationed largely because of the metal cans needed to process them. We circumvented this by renting space for a victory garden. We had two plots: one for potatoes and the other for vegetables which we ate fresh and canned the surplus.

Even though soap, toilet paper, and nylon hose were not rationed by coupons, the supply was short; when a new supply came in, word was passed quickly, and the queuing up began—never mind what brand. I saved my nylons for when I would see my husband. One pair had been made with cotton feet to lessen the amount of nylon needed. The feet were in tatters, but I continued to wear the legs when I went to Virginia to see him.

Gasoline rationing and tires were very strictly regulated, based largely on need and appeals to the local ration board. My husband and I were married in January, 1943, by my uncle from Pleasant Hill, Ohio. When asked if he would be able to come and officiate, he replied by mail, "I have a C card and my conscience to go on and both will prove elastic enough I am sure." Our car had recapped tires, and I saved the gasoline coupons for our honeymoon, a trip to Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio. When our first child Christine was born, we secured her ration coupon for shoes, but as her feet grew she needed more shoes than the coupons permitted. My grandfather, W.B. Crane, who was eighty, gave his coupon to us to buy baby shoes. In turn, he enjoyed more sweets as we shared our sugar coupons with the family.

Agricultural implements and furnaces were rationed by permit. To obtain a permit one had to prove need to the rationing board. This was only the beginning; then one had to search out the equipment to buy. Seldom could one find it locally, and much precious gasoline was used driving to other towns in search of the product. We had our name on several lists to get a refrigerator. There was no choice of model, manufacturer, or color. We used an ice box in the basement until our name came up about a year after we had applied. The Frigidaire which we got in 1944 lasted until about 1960!

Mary Crane Swarts, Rushville

inevitable price rise resulting from postwar scarcity and the abundance of unspent wartime earnings by recommending that all merchants agree to maintain current prices on goods as long as manufacturers and wholesalers did not increase their prices. Such volunteerism had little effect. Nationally, food prices alone rose 24 percent in the first month after controls ended.[10]

The national call to help finance the war with the purchase of war savings bonds found an eager response from county residents. The county chairman of the War Savings Committee, I. Lee Endres, declared, "We have been telling Treasury officials: 'Let us know how much you want us to do, and the citizens of our districts will do it. Set a figure, and we will beat it.' "[11] The county began its first bond drive with an enthusiastic two mile long parade of bands, floats, decorated cars, and hundreds of marchers. Despite this effort and others such as a "Victory Pig" auction, the county failed to reach its first $670,120 quota.[12] Although the county raised only $424,831 in its first bond drive in 1942, it surpassed its quota in all subsequent drives: second drive (1943), quota $985,600, purchases $1,403,241; third drive (1943), quota $1,068,500, purchases $1,133,536; fourth drive (1944), quota $881,600, purchases $940,040; fifth drive (1944), quota $1,063,300, purchases $1,081,170; sixth drive (1944), quota $904,300, purchases $973,385; seventh drive (1945), quota $995,200, purchases $1,128,527; Victory Loan drive (1945), quota $639,700, purchases $1,014,240.[13] In all, Rush County more than lived up to its 1942 promise, lending over $8,000,000 to the national government to aid in the war effort.

Perhaps most importantly, World War II brought more wealth to Rush County than it had ever known before. During World War I, bond drive loans to the national government netted $4,151,150 while demand deposits of individuals, partnerships, and corporations in county banks in 1920 amounted to about $3.6 million. In December, 1941, when the United States entered World War II, such deposits had shrunk to $3.3 million, perhaps suggesting why the county failed to meet its quota in the first bond drive. When most wartime measures came to an end in July, 1946, demand deposits in county banks had increased to $11.1 million and by December, 1946, reached $13.1 million. These demand deposits, in addition to the almost $9 million in savings bonds, gave the county upwards of $22 million in surplus capital with which to embark on the postwar era.[14]

The final curtain on the wartime era fell with the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan. Perhaps in recognition of the fact that the job was only partially completed, a restrained one day observance of V-E Day with school and business closings marked the end of the war in Europe on May 7, 1945.[15] In an editorial the *Republican* observed with uncommon foresight that sometime after the memory of the last six years had begun to fade there would be disputes over who won the war. For posterity the editor wanted to record that among the victors were "the vast, anonymous hordes of heroic Russian men and women who held fast before Moscow and at Stalingrad to smash the myth of German invincibility once and for all . . . [and] the brilliant generals of the Red Army . . . who led their troops 1,500 miles across Russia and Poland to Berlin."[16] Like many Americans in 1945, Rush countians appreciated the sacrifices made by Russia in the defeat of Hitler's Germany.

In contrast to the restrained observance of V-E Day, a mighty, spontaneous celebration touched off by the clang of church bells and the blast of fire and factory whistles marked V-

[10] *Ibid.*, July 1, August 3, 1946.
[11] *Ibid.*, April 24, 1942.
[12] *Ibid.*, April 28, November 11, 1942, January 6, 1943.
[13] *Ibid.*, November 2, 1943, February 21, March 3, July 19, December 19, 1944, February 24, May 15, July 10, 17, October 19, December 24, 1945.
[14] Reports on conditions of Rush County banks published quarterly, January, April, July, and October, in Rushville *Republican*.
[15] *Ibid.*, May 4, 8, 1945.
[16] *Ibid.*, May 11, 1945.

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[14] Reports on conditions of Rush County banks published quarterly, January, April, July, and October, in Rushville *Republican*.
[15] *Ibid.*, May 4, 8, 1945.
[16] *Ibid.*, May 11, 1945.

J Day and the end of the war in the Pacific theater on August 15, 1945. In Rushville, seconds after the radio flashed the official word of Japan's surrender, bells and whistles throughout the city started a din that signaled a general "whooping it up" by hundreds of local citizens. Even a near cloudburst failed to dampen the collective enthusiasm. The holiday atmosphere climaxed on August 16 with a county-wide parade in Rushville. The parade, which included Gold Star mothers, veterans, units from every township, and various other organizations wended its way from West First Street to Memorial Park where local Methodist minister Dr. J. T. Scull expressed the hope of all when he prayed "for a world peace that will last."[17]

The peace that followed brought changes in the physical appearance of this rural, agricultural community as well as in the way people lived. To the casual observer the physical world of the rural community appeared changeless. Broad fields dominated the landscape, stands of stately trees pierced the horizon, barns and silos bulged with the annual harvest, and quiet streets in towns and villages flowed gently into the countryside. Closer inspection revealed this appearance of changelessness to be an illusion. By subtle, and at times not so subtle, means the rural community of Rush County experienced far reaching physical change in the years following the war. The mechanization of agriculture and the decline in the number of farm families meant more than simply fewer families involved in agriculture. It meant the abandonment of farmsteads, the disappearance of horses and horse-drawn farm implements, and the tearing down of the ubiquitous fence rows that gave each farmer his sense of possession of that small portion of the rich earth he loved. Even abandoned buildings meant "improvements" to the tax man, so unless they were needed for storage the new owners bulldozed down and burned these relics of another time and put the land into crops. Where once the farm family had gathered to share the simple pleasures of being

[17] *Ibid.*, August 15, 17, 1945.

Detasseling hybrid corn is a lucrative summer job for students in Rush County.

The John S. Green farm in Rush County erecting a new hog barn, 1970s.

together, now only a tall oak or pine tree remained to remind the concerned that this ground had once meant home.

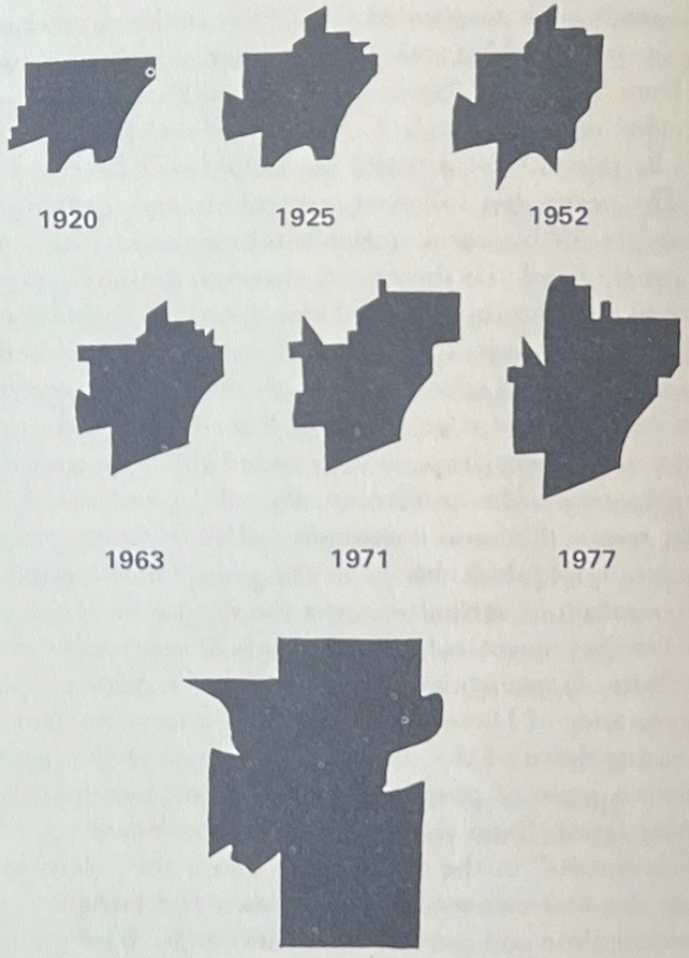
The physical transformation of the countryside, occurring in a dispersed and random fashion, drew less attention and aroused less concern than changes that took place in towns and villages. When a township lost a single farmstead, few noticed; but when a town lost a store, a bank, or a school, many experienced a sense of loss. The changes in county towns and villages extended from the virtual disappearance of some villages such as Occident and Farmers, to the deterioration of towns such as Manilla and Milroy, as well as to the growth of a few such as Carthage and Rushville (see Figure 4). Deterioration left its mark in abandoned houses and buildings, deserted streets, and a sense of melancholy etched in the faces of those who remained. Growth brought the urbanization of farm land, new houses and streets, and a local sense of optimism as well as a plethora of urban problems ranging from traffic congestion to waste disposal.

Figure 5 illustrates the areal growth of Rushville, the county's only urban place, in the years between 1920 and 1977. In 1920 the limits of the town extended from Eleventh Street on the north to the north shore of Flat Rock River on the south, and from Fort Wayne Road on the east to about Spencer Street on the west. During the decade of the 1920s the city's population increased 3.8 percent, from 5,498 to 5,709. At this time developers made two additions to the town—the Stewart and Stewart Memorial Park addition north of Eleventh Street in 1924, and the Endres-Tompkins Company addition between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets west of the Pennsylvania railroad tracks in 1929. Even though the city's population increased 4.4 percent to 5,960 in 1940, the Depression curtailed building and inhibited areal expansion.[18]

Restrictions on building caused by World War II, along with a 13.4 percent population increase during the 1940s to 6,761 in

[18]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Population*, III, Pt. 1, p. 719; *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Population*, II, Pt. 2, p. 783.

Figure 5. Areal Growth of Rushville



1950, produced a critical housing shortage. Rushville then had only 1,695 dwelling units for its 2,340 families. Despite rent increases of as much as 100 percent, housing was almost impossible to find. A vacant apartment attracted fifty applications from prospective renters while one frustrated renter advertised "$100 Reward—for information leading to rental of three or four bedroom modern house. Reliable tenant willing to pay substantial rental."[19] This pent-up demand, combined with the trend toward suburban living and continued population growth, touched off the postwar areal expansion (indicated in Figure 5) that continued into the 1970s. The first expansion came in 1948 with the Asher Sizemore addition on the northeast side of town. In the 1950s developers made no less than five new additions including the first Sugar Hill section in 1955 and the two Park subdivisions in 1955 and 1956.[20] Rushville's population increased 7.4 percent during the 1950s, reaching a peak of 7,264 in 1960. During the 1960s, even though population declined by 8 percent to 6,686 (or 578 less than in 1960), areal expansion continued. This suggests that the move to suburbia had taken over as the prime force for expansion. Developers added seven new additions to the north side during the 1960s and another Sugar Hill addition in 1972.[21]

Areal expansion in the 1950s had only minimal effect on the population density of the pre-1950 area of Rushville. Out of a total of 7,264 in 1960, the pre-1950 area had a population of 7,020 or a growth of 259 while the population of the annexed area totaled 244. The older area of Rushville began to feel the effects of areal expansion in the 1960s. In 1970 out of a total population of 6,686 only 4,684 lived in the 1960 area, a population loss of 2,580 or almost 36 percent. At the same time the newly annexed area had a population of 2,002.[22] Like many other urban communities, Rushville had begun to feel the impact of the lure of suburbia and the decline of the inner city.

Areal expansion paralleled an improvement in the standard of living and the appeal of the "good life." In 1943 the *Republican* published "1943 ABC's," a limerick describing consumer scarcities such as automobiles, electrical goods, and hosiery. Wartime advertisements often declared "We are sorry. We have no more . . . ." Homemakers who had borne the shortages of war now enjoyed the benefits of peace. Frozen foods made their first appearance in 1946, and by 1952 so many were available that the rankest amateur could produce a gourmet meal. Frostbite fast became the chief hazard of the kitchen. Other home improvements quickly followed the end of the war—automatic dishwashers (1946), automatic clothes washers and electric freezers (1947), electric ranges (1948), room air conditioners (1950), and automatic gas and electric clothes dryers (1951).[23]

Perhaps no innovation had greater impact than television. Rush County residents saw their first television program in May, 1948, at a public demonstration in a Rushville radio shop. Home viewing began as early as April, 1949, on screens ranging in size from 10 to 16 inches. Over the next few years screens grew to as much as 30 inches in size while prices ranged from $229.95 for a 10-inch set to as much as $549.95 for the larger sizes. The early sets had only black and white pictures, but by Christmas, 1955, color picture sets were available. Remote control channel

[19]U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population* (1950), I, *Number of Inhabitants*, pp. 14-17; Rushville *Republican*, March 11, May 8, July 13, 1946.

[20]City of Rushville, Plat Book No. 1 (A-K), located in County Auditor's Office, Rush County Courthouse.

[21]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population* (1960), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-23; *U.S. Census of Population* (1970), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-28; Rushville Plat Book No. 1 (A-K).

[22]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population* (1960), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-23; *U.S. Census of Population* (1970), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-28; Rushville Plat Book No. 1 (A-K).

[23]Rushville *Republican*, January 9, 1943, March 19, 1942, September 13, 1946, March 17, 1952, November 12, 1946, July 17, 23, 1947, May 6, 1948, June 30, 1950, October 29, November 21, December 13, 1951.

Carrying Things Too Far

On March 10, 1928, the Rushville Lions defeated the Connersville Spartans in the regional basketball tourney, making us eligible to go to the State Finals at the Butler Field House in Indianapolis. Students were of the opinion that we should have a free day from school on Monday, March 12, but school officials did not agree. Nineteen enthusiastic students, including one basketball player, took matters into their own hands and played hooky that afternoon.

We carried our celebration to the home of the enemy—Connersville High School. The principal, Mr. Meyers, took us in charge after the school had been set in an uproar. Leaving the school, we went to the business district to get cokes and agitate a little more. We aroused the ire of several local youths—which eventually resulted in brick throwing by the Rushville fans and a shower of eggs from the opposition. Needless to say, we left in a hurry.

March 13 was the unlucky day. The basketball player was dropped from the team. After being threatened with expulsion from school, the participating students were required to write a letter of apology to the Indiana High School Athletic Association and the Connersville High School. The punishment did not end there; we were not allowed to go to the state finals but had to go to class instead. One room in the Graham Annex was our confined area and Miss Madeline Gullion took charge of us. The Rushville team was defeated in the first game, so our confinement ended.

The incident appeared in the local and Connersville newspapers along with our full apology and all names, so our celebration became well-known to the community.

Isabel Schrader Pike, Rushville

selection that eliminated even occasional movement by the viewer became common by 1959. In 1972 a movement began to obtain cable reception that would extend a set's normal range and give viewers the choice of twelve channels from which to select programs.[24] One would now have little reason to leave home in search of entertainment.

Never merely a plaything for the rich, as the early automobile had been, credit buying gave television an almost immediate, pervasive effect. In the home, balance and beauty of a room was sacrificed in order to view the screen better. Furniture was rearranged, and even lighting changed in favor of television. "TV dinners" added the television room to the kitchen and dining room as a family eating area. The "TV chair" became a new household furnishing, and conversation fast became a lost art. In silent repose family and guests gathered on a deaf and dumb basis. One national study reported more man hours were spent watching television than were spent working for pay.[25] The time-honored "night out at the movies" became a thing of the past. By 1951 Rushville had only one movie house left; it survived by outshowing the "home show." In 1954 the theater added Cinemascope, which it advertised as "The Finest Motion Picture Screen in the World." In place of movies like "Charley's Aunt" and "Blossoms in the Dust" it began showing movies like "Peyton Place" and skin flicks like Brigitte Bardot's "La Parisienne." Nearby drive-in theaters went even further with the introduction of "Adults Only" movies. "Be first to admit you saw it" changed from a moral imperative to a sign of social sophistication.[26]

Technological change in the home had its greatest impact on women because it removed much of the drudgery from

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[24] *Ibid.*, May 18, 1948, September 29, 1949, February 8, 1951, January 16, 1956, February 12, 1959, January 19, 1972.

[25] *Ibid.*, October 14, December 17, 1953.

[26] *Ibid.*, January 15, 1942, January 27, August 9, 1954, May 1, November 5, 1958, October 5, 1959, February 26, 1970.

homemaking, allowing more time for work and play outside the house. In 1940 in Rushville there were 614 women (25 percent of the female population above the age of fourteen) either holding jobs or actively seeking them. Included in this group were 66, or 11 percent, that had professional or semi-professional jobs. By 1960 there were 951 women, or 36 percent, in the fourteen and over group in the labor force with 181, or 19 percent, holding professional or semi-professional jobs. By 1970, when the census changed the reporting age to sixteen years old and over, there were 1,120 women, or 43 percent, employed or actively seeking employment with 155, or 14 percent, holding professional or semi-professional jobs.[27] This steady increase in both the actual numbers and the percentages suggests that the stay-at-home "mystique" for women had already begun to decline even before the appearance of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1964. Friedan's argument that happiness and fulfillment for the modern woman could not be found in the home, but only in a career outside the home, may have merely provided rationalization for what many Rushville women were already doing.

The economic independence that work and a career provided may have had some negative effect on the institution of marriage. In 1960, among those age fourteen and older, 17 percent of the women and 21 percent of the men in the county were single. By 1970, 19 percent of the women in that group and 25 percent of the men were unmarried. Once entered into, the traditional reason for marriage, to have children, appears not to have been negatively influenced. In 1940 the fertility ratio (that is, the number of children under five years of age per 1,000 women of childbearing age) was 301. That ratio increased during the 1940s and 1950s to 520 in 1960, then declined to 355 in 1980. Thus, though lower in 1980 than in 1960, the ratio remained above that of 1940. The same cannot be said for the permanency of marriage. In 1949 the ratio of marriage licenses issued to divorce applications was 3.8 to 1. During the early 1950s the situation became so alarming that in 1954 the community established a family clinic to provide assistance to couples having marital difficulties. In spite of such efforts the ratio was 2.6 to 1 in 1955 and by early 1959 was running at 1.3 to 1. In 1960, 193 divorced women and 139 divorced men lived in Rush County; by 1970 these figures had increased 32 percent for women to 259, and 25 percent to 178 for men.[28]

The growing instability of marriage, combined with working mothers and more children, contributed to an increase in juvenile delinquency. The problem began during the war when fathers were either in the military or working long hours at their jobs and an increasing number of mothers had jobs outside the home. Free from parental restraint and supervision, more and more youths found themselves at odds with the law. In 1940 Rushville police made four juvenile arrests. By 1943, when the town reintroduced a curfew law, that number had increased to twenty-four. Under the new curfew law children under eighteen years of age were prohibited from loitering on streets and congregating in public places after 10:00 at night Sunday through Friday, and 10:30 p.m. on Saturdays during the school year (10:30 and 11:00 p.m. in the summer months). One long blast of the fire whistle was the warning for children to get home. Because the ordinance lacked "tough" penalties for violations, over the years both juveniles and their parents flouted the law, and juvenile crime, ranging from vandalism to petty theft and reckless driving, increased. In 1948 a wave of vandalism struck

[27]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Population*, II, Pt. 2, p. 719; *U.S. Census of Population* (1960), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-162; *U.S. Census of Population* (1970), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, pp. 16-468, 16-477.

[28]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population* (1950), II, Pt. 14, p. 14-107; *U.S. Census of Population* (1960), I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-134; *U.S. Census of Population* (1970), *Characteristics of the Population*, Pt. 16, *Indiana*, p. 16-195; *U.S. Census of Population* (1980), I, Chapter C, Pt. 16, pp. 429, 447; Rushville *Republican*, July 14, 1954, January 24, 1955, February 12, 1959.

Rushville and Rush County and left in its wake the Jackson Township school a "shambles" and a church desecrated. In 1953 a long series of petty thefts was solved when the police apprehended nine youths ranging in age from eight to thirteen. A grand jury investigation in 1960 recommended diligent curfew enforcement before juvenile problems got "completely out of hand." Of particular concern was the wild driving that took place at late hours in Rushville and vicinity and the "sex parties" and "sordid doings in a certain neighborhood."[29]

Despite the warnings of the grand jury, the familiar forms of juvenile delinquency continued to grow. As one irate citizen, James A. Leisure, wrote, if juvenile delinquency were curbed, "the police wouldn't have a damn thing to do."[30] Then in November, 1970, another grand jury investigation awoke the community to a new danger—drugs. Possession and illegal use of various drugs had been a problem at least from the 1920s onward, but it had been primarily an adult crime. In 1939 almost four tons of marijuana used to manufacture drugged cigarettes were discovered and destroyed in the county.[31] Parents had little knowledge about young people's use of marijuana and other drugs until 1969 when the *Republican* ran a series of articles warning parents about such activity.[32]

Rush County parents had reason for concern, for the same grand jury reported a "sizable number" of young people in the county apparently experimenting with or using various types of drugs. The five-and-a-half page report indicated that a portion of the county's high school age young people had experimented with marijuana and a "significant number of young people used Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD)." Experimentation with drugs in the amphetamine and barbituate classes had also occurred, but to a lesser extent. The grand jury found that "fear of prosecution and community disapproval seems to have small effect in discouraging drug experimentation but does enhance to some extent the solidarity of the group." The report indicated that the grand jury found "no large scale organization involved in the sale or procurement of narcotics or dangerous drugs," but that drugs were readily obtainable by young people in Rush County. In its conclusion the jury affirmed "that a drug abuse threat exists to the young people of this community . . . of sufficient magnitude to warrant educational steps being taken to alleviate it."[33]

Doris Boyer, a mother who had been born, raised, and married in Rushville, sympathized with the delinquency of youth by declaring, "With nothing for the youth of this town, what can you expect. As long as I have remembered there has never been nothing in this town for them to do." In a letter to the editor signed "Disgusted Teen-ager" a youth agreed: "I have lived in Rushville for seven years and you say every year that you will get something for teenagers to do. But you never have."[34] Whether these charges were justified or not, the community had tried to meet the needs of youth.

As early as 1940 concerned citizens made enthusiastic appeals for starting a Boys' Club in Rushville. Even then anxiety existed over the growing trend of delinquency among young boys that resulted from having too much leisure compared with an older generation that had had more duties to occupy their time. In March, 1941, the Rushville Youth Foundation, Incorporated, was organized to promote the physical and moral betterment of the youth of the Rushville vicinity. After many months of work raising funds and stressing the need of a Boys' Club for the community, the foundation purchased a building and opened a Boys' Club to over 400 youths in January, 1943. The club

[29] Rushville *Republican*, June 2, 15, 1943, June 8, 1948, December 18, 1950, August 26, 1953, December 1, 1960.

[30] *Ibid.*, August 17, 1970.

[31] *Ibid.*, November 5, 1970, February 6, 1922, August 5, 1925, November 6, 1939.

[32] *Ibid.*, March 10, 1969.

[33] *Ibid.*, November 5, 1970.

[34] *Ibid.*, November 7, 1970, August 21, 1969.

At the Rushville Boys' Club, early 1950s.

The Rushville Boys' Club, 1984.

included a library, games room, gymnasium, reading room, lounge, photography room, kitchen, and shop.[35]

Under the slogan "A Big Program, On a Big Scale, Producing Big Results," the club offered a wide range of activities to appeal to the free time of youth, including a monthly free dance. The shop contained a woodworking department completely equipped with power and hand tools; during the war boys made splints, stretchers, first-aid cabinets, sector control boards, and other equipment for local civil defense organizations. The athletic program included basketball, volleyball, badminton, boxing, wrestling, tumbling, and during the war a popular game called "Bomb Berlin." In addition, boys could get a complete working knowledge of photography, the opportunity for practical study of aeronautics, and exposure to the delights of cooking.[36]

Fred McCarty, one of the hundreds of youngsters who took advantage of the club's opportunities, recalled his experience: "I have had great fun at the Boys' Club. I have met and made many new friends as I participated in the different activities. Many happy hours spent there will always be remembered to say nothing of the actual contribution[s] which have been made to the growth of boys."[37] Despite such successes, by the late 1950s, just as its need increased, the Rushville Youth Foundation found it more and more difficult to find parents to assist and support its programs. By the early 1960s the club's ability to bring youths together on a harmonious basis had given way to charges of gang domination. Allegedly "North Enders" dominated the club to the detriment of "West Enders." Whether for lack of support or because of disharmony, by the late 1960s the club had limited influence on the youth of the community. The grand jury report on drug use renewed concern among both young and old for a

[35] *Ibid.*, June 18, 1940, March 22, 1941, January 21, 1943.

[36] *Ibid.*, April 29, 1943; Rushville Boys' Club pamphlet, undated, in Rushville Public Library.

[37] Rushville *Republican*, June 14, 1958.

new youth center. When a group of concerned citizens proposed such a center to the city council in 1971, Councilman Herbert Caldwell was prompted to remark, "It's a pleasure to have a project which no one opposes."[38] Nonetheless, the project remained unfinished.

In the 1970s, while reviewing the increasing delinquency among local young people, teacher Mary Helen Stephen noted a direct relationship between the increase in delinquency and the decline of the community school. Consolidation of community schools in Rush County began as early as 1876 when Washington Township consolidated five one-room schools into a new school building erected at Raleigh. The Raleigh School was the first consolidated school in Indiana and one of the first in the nation. "Old schoolers" decried the disappearance of the one-room school, believing that "their children [did not learn] the basic elements of an education as thoroughly as they [the "old schoolers"] did."[39] No one then spoke of the loss of the sense of community that resulted from consolidation as Stephen did in the 1970s, but it was perhaps an unspoken feeling. By 1926 only three one-room schools remained in the county—two in Richland Township at Neff's Corner and Freeman's, and one in Carthage for black children. Even these had disappeared by the mid-1930s, and Rush County was one of nineteen counties in the state that had no one-room schools. Students who had attended one-room schools were transported to consolidated schools in motor driven hacks that were in use all over the county.[40]

Busing of students and consolidation included more than the elimination of one-room schools. In the early 1920s Rush County's twelve townships had fifteen grade schools and twelve high schools outside the Rushville school system. During the 1920s, beginning with the abandonment of the high school at Homer in 1924 and Webb High School in 1928, the number of high schools declined to nine by 1930 and seven by 1940. Consolidation of the grade schools occurred more slowly. Moscow lost its grade school in 1928, and the Center Township School closed during the 1930s. Moscow regained its school in 1939 after it had been renovated by a grant from the Works Progress Administration, but the closing of the grade school at Homer in 1940 left only thirteen grade schools in the county.[41]

During the 1940s the number of schools in the county remained the same, but the closing of Raleigh High School in 1955 left the county with six township high schools. Ironically, the school system that had begun county consolidation in 1876 was the first to feel the effect of modern consolidation. The announcement of the closing of the Raleigh School in the spring touched off a burning controversy that raged through the summer of 1955. The Washington Township trustee ordered the closing of the school as the only way out of a "bad problem" that resulted from the need for a $190,000 improvement in the existing facility. In addition, despite contact with all the colleges in the state to recruit teachers, only three had been hired who were qualified to teach high school courses. In order to be fully accredited by the state, the school needed nine or ten teachers, a new school building, adequate gymnasium facilities, and the addition of new courses. The Raleigh School could expect no aid from the state, since an enrollment of fifty-six students was needed to get state aid for even two teachers and enrollment had averaged only forty-three in the school year 1954-55.[42] Because only four high schools were fully accredited at the time, the closing of Raleigh High School reopened the question of township school consolidation that had received considerable attention in the late 1940s.

[38] *Ibid.*, December 17, 1959, May 5, 1962, January 20, 1971.

[39] Comment by Mary Helen Stephen to author, Summer, 1979; Milroy *Press*, April 21, 1921; Rushville *Republican*, July 3, 1928.

[40] Milroy *Press*, February 26, 1926; Rushville *Republican*, February 20, 1929, December 8, 1937.

[41] Rushville *Republican*, July 25, 1924, September 7, 1928, September 8, 1930, January 13, 1939, September 12, 1940.

[42] *Ibid.*, May 4, September 6, 10, 13, 16, 1955.

To achieve a potential saving of an estimated $10 million in educational costs to Indiana taxpayers, the General Assembly passed and the governor signed a county school unit law in 1947 that would enable townships to join and combine in having fewer schools. To protect the principle of "home rule," opponents of the law were able to write into the bill a provision requiring a two thirds vote of the trustees in a county for the plan to go into effect. Not a single county in the state, including Rush County, adopted the proposed consolidation program. This solid opposition from the township trustees resulted from the fact that under existing conditions they hired the teachers, purchased school supplies, and let the contracts for school bus routes. Under the county unit plan, they would lose these powers to a consolidated school board.[43]

Though this effort failed, the pressures of increasing costs of education and declining enrollment for township schools reflected in the Raleigh case continued. In 1959 the Indiana General Assembly passed a new consolidation law, the General School Reorganization Act. Under the provisions of this act the judge of the circuit court in each county was empowered to appoint a nine-member committee to study the schools in his county and propose a plan for consolidated reorganization. The law did not force school district reorganization, nor did the committee have the power to force any reorganization. Chapter 202 of the 1959 *Laws of Indiana* only provided for the machinery whereby reorganization could be accomplished. In Rush County a reorganization committee was formed, and hearings were held over the next two years. The committee submitted its report to the State Commission on School Reorganization for its review in August, 1961.[44]

[43] *Ibid.*, April 9, 11, 1947; *Laws of Indiana*, 1947, Chapter 281.

[44] Rushville *Republican*, August 25, 1959, March 16, 1960; "A Proposed Plan for the Reorganization of School Corporations, Rush County, Indiana," August, 1961, p. vii (submitted by the Rush County Committee for the Reorganization of School Corporations, and hereafter cited "Plan for Reorganization"). A copy of this document is in the Rushville Public Library.

After considering several alternatives the county committee recommended a single unit educational system for the entire county. A single county unit, it felt, would offer equal educational opportunity to all students in the county. There would be better opportunity for utilizing present facilities and less need for altering facilities. School tax rates for all corporations in the county would be the same, and the school board of the new corporation would have representatives from all areas of the county. The committee rejected a two-unit plan because it felt there was no natural location outside Rushville city if the eleven townships comprising one unit desired to build a high school. They also rejected a three-unit plan, with northern and southern units and a single Rushville Township unit, because declining population trends outside Rushville Township would have denied equal educational opportunity to each child "regardless of the township in which he resides."[45]

While the state commission in Indianapolis considered the merits of the single-unit plan, local citizens heard and discussed its merits at public meetings at home. While the plan aroused considerable opposition at these meetings, the state commission approved it in September, 1961.[46] The plan would not go into effect, however, until 55 percent of the county's voters signed a petition in favor of endorsing the state's approval or until the plan was submitted to the voters at a subsequent election. When the petition option failed, the one-unit plan was placed on the ballot of the regular primary election the following May. Voters overwhelmingly rejected the plan, with twenty of the county's twenty-one precincts voting against it. The total vote was 3,084 against and only 736 in favor of the plan.[47] Under the law the county committee now had to propose a new plan.

Even though the committee had only ninety days to prepare a new plan, investigation and public discussion of the

[45] "Plan for Reorganization," pp. 29-33.

[46] Rushville *Republican*, September 28, 1961.

[47] *Ibid.*, September 28, 1961, May 9, 1962.

alternatives went on for over a year. Ennis Rose, a resident of Noble Township, perhaps best explained the reason for the protracted discussion when he declared, "We feel we're fighting for our lives."[48] Many clung fervently to the neighborhood school concept. Hence, though they had previously rejected it, in May, 1963, the committee cautiously offered a three-unit plan with variations. In a surprise move, however, even before the plan could be formalized, five townships in the north and west signed a resolution to merge themselves into the county's first township school consolidation.[49] Reorganization not only returned to square one, it was now being played on a new game board.

Ripley, Jackson, Posey, Walker, and Center townships resolved in June, 1963, to combine under a 1949 law that permitted the creation of metropolitan school districts. Under Chapter 226 of the 1949 *Laws*, the township trustees in two or more townships could, by joint resolution, form a single unit. To assure that such a unit would not be broken up under the provisions of the 1959 law, the newly formed unit had to meet the standards of the state commission. In addition, the local county reorganization committee had to agree that the newly formed unit would fit into any subsequent county plan. The merger meant the closing of the high schools at Carthage, Mays, Arlington, and Manilla, and construction of a new high school, probably at Henderson.

One reason the merger moved so quickly was to prevent a dissident faction in Jackson Township from seeking to join the Rushville city system. In response, the dissidents filed a remonstrance forcing a special election. According to the 1949 law, if a remonstrance were filed in any one township then all involved in the proposed merger must vote on the issue, and the total vote would decide the question. As it turned out, the voters had two rather than just one reorganization plan presented to them at the special election held in September, 1963: one, a reorganization that formed the five townships into a single metropolitan school district under the 1949 law; the other, a reorganization of the Rushville city system and Rushville, Union, and Washington townships into a consolidated school corporation under the 1959 law. The latter was being discussed as part of the county committee's three-unit plan at the time of the surprise five-township merger. The five-township move hastened consolidation efforts and helped place the issue on the ballot. The basic difference between the two methods of reorganization was that under the 1959 consolidation law an opposing vote in any one township or school unit killed the entire plan. Under the metropolitan plan the total vote of all townships or school units determined the outcome. Whatever the outcome of the special election the State Commission on School Reorganization still had to approve any reorganization.[50]

The voters approved both plans, but the state commission refused its necessary approval until after the county committee submitted a reorganization plan for the entire county. The state commission withheld its approval because the southern area lacked a sufficient number of students to form a third unit. The stubborn reorganization problem was back in the hands of the county reorganization committee. Partly in frustration, the committee now turned to a variation of the previously rejected two-unit plan. The new plan called for one unit to specialize in vocational training while the other was to be a top-notch academic unit. Such painful groping toward a solution found little favor because the plan would have resulted eventually in two high schools in the county, one a top academic school, the other a vocational training school.[51]

Stymied once again, the committee members did not entirely reject the two-unit plan; instead they proposed to divide the county into east and west school districts. The beauty of this plan was that it left intact the two earlier school mergers that

[48] *Ibid.*, June 11, 1963.
[49] *Ibid.*, June 14, 21, 1963.
[50] *Ibid.*, June 21, July 19, 21, September 11, 1963.
[51] *Ibid.*, September 11, October 8, December 9, 1963, January 14, 1964.

were already approved by the voters by simply adding two southern townships to each, and it also resolved the objection of the state commission. The east district was to include Rushville city, and Rushville, Washington, Union, Noble, and Richland townships. The west district was to include Ripley, Center, Posey, Jackson, Walker, Orange, and Anderson townships. The county committee approved the name "Rushville Consolidated Schools" for the eastern unit and designated the western unit "West Rush County Schools."[52]

The state commission approved the two-unit plan, and it was placed on the May, 1964, primary election ballot for approval. Voters in the twelve precincts involved in the proposal to form Rushville Consolidated Schools (RCS) endorsed the plan by a total vote of 890 to 620 with only the Noble and Richland precincts voting against it. Voters in the nine precincts involved in the merger to form the remainder of the county into the West Rush County Schools rejected the plan by a total vote of 883 to 527, with only the Posey and Walker precincts favoring it. With voter approval, organization of RCS moved ahead quickly. The judge of the Rush circuit court appointed an interim school board until an elected board could be chosen at the first general election following creation of the school corporation. In July the board hired the first superintendent for the consolidated system.[53]

The seven remaining townships soon found themselves in a quandary. The new school year was fast approaching, and they were no closer to solving their reorganization problem than they had been in 1961. Jackson and Anderson townships petitioned to be annexed to RCS effective January 1, 1965. The annexation did not require a voter referendum if within thirty days following school board approval no remonstrance was filed in Rush circuit court. Since none was, their annexation left only Ripley, Center, Posey, Walker, and Orange townships not reorganized. Ripley Township was already negotiating for annexation with the Charles A. Beard Memorial School Corporation in Knightstown, Henry County, leaving only four townships for possible consolidation. Too small to consolidate on their own, these townships had few options left except to join RCS or continue as separate systems. Posey and Center townships joined RCS in 1966, Walker and Orange townships in 1967. With the exception of Ripley, all the townships were now part of the RCS system. By a circuitous and tortuous route the county had arrived at the reorganization proposed by the Rush County Committee for the Reorganization of School Corporations in August, 1961. The office of Rush County school superintendent, established in 1873, came to an end in 1968 with the county's twentieth school superintendent its last.[54]

In a sea of reorganized school systems, Ripley Township now drifted alone. A survey by the township trustee in 1966 found 167 who favored reorganization with the Knightstown school corporation, ten who favored reorganization with the Rushville system, thirty-one who favored a wait and see approach, two who favored staying in Carthage, and one who was "against everything."[55] The township trustee and his advisory board approved annexation to Knightstown effective January 1, 1968. Some residents, feeling that the eventual closing of the high school would be the death blow to Carthage, filed a remonstrance. The case was brought before a special judge in April, 1968, who ruled that annexation should take place "as soon as possible as by law provided." The plaintiffs appealed the judge's decision to the state Court of Appeals in September, 1968.[56]

After almost two years of waiting the decision of the court went against the plaintiffs; annexation stood.[57] The feelings of

[52] *Ibid.*, January 21, May 6, 1964.
[53] *Ibid.*, May 6, July 22, 1964.
[54] *Ibid.*, July 24, November 4, 1964, February 11, July 1, 1966, July 22, 1967, August 12, 1968.
[55] *Ibid.*, August 31, 1966.
[56] *Ibid.*, May 23, 1967, January 17, April 27, September 9, 1968.
[57] 148 Ind. App. 33 (1970).

School Consolidation

"It is true that the local school has long been the focal point of the small community. I agree with those who say that the loss of the school takes the heart out of the town. But in spite of this, I have to ask myself, 'How many of these kids from Arlington are ever going to come back?' What then is the responsibility of the parent: concern about the heart of the community or exposing the child to the broadest possible educational opportunity that, if taken advantage of, can prepare his child for life after he leaves the community?

"The prime purpose of schools is no longer to provide entertainment and a rallying point for loyalty to the small town. Those are nice spin-off benefits but have nothing to do with modern education. Quality of life, yes, education, no! After eleven years of consolidation, I still get feedback from my friends in the township: 'John, you didn't do us right; our community is gone, and it'll be worse when we lose the grade school.' I don't blame them; it is still an emotional issue.

"But personally, we have had five children go through Rushville High School. We've heard no complaints from them. Mom and Dad do most of the griping. Once in a while, I think, 'Dammit! It would be a lot easier just to go into Arlington for the class play, or band practice, history club, or whatever is going on.' But for me, that's not the answer. The answer is my child's opportunity for education, whether or not we as a community take advantage of it."

John Nelson, Arlington, member of the
Rush County School Reorganization Committee

those who opposed annexation in Ripley Township and all those who found themselves dragged along in the wake of consolidation were perhaps best expressed by a county parent, Roberta Z. Steffey, who wrote: "Bear with us 'Rushville' while we adjust to our new high school. Let us have our moments of nostalgia and regrets as we send you our most prized possessions—our children. . . . We will miss the togetherness of a smaller group, the competition among our rivals in sports, music and academic subjects but above all we will miss knowing they are here in our own Small Town, U.S.A."[58]

The pressures for school consolidation came essentially from two sources—the relative decline in township school enrollment and the costs of maintaining an expanding school curriculum. In 1920 a total of 3,719 students were enrolled in all Rush County schools with about 2,700 (73 percent) in township schools and about 1,000 (27 percent) in Rushville city schools.[59] Though enrollment figures for county schools rose and fell during the next several decades, Rushville city school enrollment showed a steady increase over township schools. On the eve of the push for consolidation in 1961 there were 4,933 students attending all Rush County schools, with 2,725 (55 percent) in township schools and 2,208 (45 percent) in Rushville city schools.[60] The total county school population continued to grow, reaching 4,968 in 1964 at the time of the first stage of consolidation, with Rushville Consolidated Schools having 3,124 students and the remaining seven township schools only 1,844 students. Enrollment reached a peak of 5,201 students in 1969, thereafter declining to 4,122 in 1975; but it was enrollment in a single-unit system.[61]

Even more important, given the changes taking place in education, was the pressure on the township high schools to

[58] Rushville *Republican*, September 4, 1968.
[59] *Ibid.*, May 22, 1920, September 14, 1925.
[60] *Ibid.*, September 5, 9, 1961.
[61] *Ibid.*, September 10, 1964, September 3, 1969, October 11, 1975.

maintain a minimum enrollment. The state law in 1959 that established the machinery for consolidation also provided for the withholding of state funds from high schools with enrollments of less than 120 students. At that time only three high schools satisfied the requirement—Rushville (480), New Salem (148), and Milroy (132). The county's other four high schools all had enrollments of less than 120—Carthage (109), Mays (107), Manilla (86), and Arlington (76). Confronted with the pressure of declining enrollments and consolidation, the township high schools faced a bleak future. In 1964, when Rushville Consolidated High School had 727 students, the remaining five township high schools had a combined enrollment of only 587—Milroy (157), Carthage (140), Mays (103), Arlington (101), and Manilla (86).[62]

The need to maintain a minimum enrollment came largely from changes in curriculum and the resulting increase in the costs of education. The school curriculum of the 1920s offered a straightforward basic education. In the elementary grades it stressed the three R's—reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic—along with penmanship, art, physical education, and music. Included with English, history, and mathematics among the thirteen or so subjects taught in the high school were physical geography, botany, physics, biology, and foreign languages. The curriculum also included "specialty" subjects such as music, band, home economics, and agriculture. High schools had the traditional function of preparing young people for college and stressed academic subjects. In 1931, 34 percent of the boys and 32 percent of the girls who graduated from Rushville High School enrolled in college.[63]

[62] *Ibid.*, January 27, 1959, September 10, 1964.

[63] *Rushville School Building Survey* (Bureau of Cooperative Research and Field Service, School of Education, Indiana University, July, 1945), pp. 42-43; Rushville *Republican*, October 23, 1924, July 21, 1925; Milroy *Press*, September 4, 1925; Rushville *Republican*, January 19, 1928, August 27, 1930.

Few of the school buildings in Rush County were new even in the 1920s. In the Rushville city system, the Havens School had been built in 1891, the high school and Belle Gregg in 1906, and the Graham Annex in 1914. The only new addition to the system was the Memorial Gymnasium built in 1925.[64] It required some 120 teachers in the 1920s to staff the county's 27 schools—34 high school teachers, 39 intermediate teachers, 32 primary teachers, and 16 special teachers, including music.[65] The main requirement for teachers was that they had to be high school graduates and "have 12 weeks professional training at [an] approved normal school."[66] A teacher with ten years experience earned an average yearly salary of about $1,300.[67] For the county as a whole a "no frills" education, in adequate but hardly sumptuous facilities, taught by dedicated if not highly trained faculty, cost the taxpayers in 1921 about $97 per pupil per year.[68]

The 1930s added little to the curriculum, and, since enrollment in county schools declined by almost 600, there were no new school buildings constructed though some changes did occur in facilities. Improvements were made in the Graham high school building in the early 1930s; the Washington School for black children closed in 1932; and Posey Township built a new school gymnasium in 1939. Teacher salaries declined, with high school teachers receiving about $125 to $130 a month, and grade school teachers roughly $100 to $110 a month. The cost of education certainly did not increase during the depression years of the 1930s, nor does it appear that it did during World War II. In the 1943-44 school year education in the Rushville system,

[64] *Rushville School Building Survey*, pp. 94, 116.

[65] Rushville *Republican*, August 20, 1927.

[66] *Ibid.*, June 22, 1921.

[67] *Ibid.*, November 11, 1926.

[68] Calculated from a report prepared by the county superintendent of schools and published *ibid.*, December 7, 1921.

one of the best funded in the county, still cost the taxpayers an average of only $92.65 per pupil per year.[69]

World War II itself may not have had a significant influence on the costs of education, but the war and its aftermath focused attention on preparedness and learning that eventually brought far reaching changes in education and its costs. The war had its initial effect on curriculum in the high school. In Rushville, course offerings increased to twenty-six, with the addition of such academic courses as Latin American history, aeronautics, Spanish, and trigonometry, and such new vocational courses as machine shop and "Diversified Occupations." A new emphasis was also put on physical education, stressing development of physical vigor, stamina, care of the body, and good health habits for girls as well as boys. (This emphasis may have come, in part, from the fact that in 1942 about one half of one contingent of county draftees was sent back home because they flunked their physical examinations.)[70]

The postwar era continued the pressure for an expanded and improved educational system. Everett Light, the Rushville school superintendent, declared in 1955 that a first-class high school facility needed "laboratories" for reading; speech departments that included debate and radio training in a special room equipped for broadcasting; vocational, educational, and personal guidance service; a placement program for graduating students; speech and hearing therapy; expanded library facilities, visual aids, workrooms, and rest rooms for teachers; and more classroom space to handle new course offerings. These recommendations, he added, were "basic" and did not include any of the so-called "frills" of modern education.[71]

The Rushville school board actually began planning for the expanded educational needs of students in 1943. At that time it hired an Indianapolis architectual firm to survey the building needs of the system. On the firm's recommendation the board proposed a plan for the construction of a new high school after the war that would cost an estimated $200,000 to $250,000. The land adjacent to the Memorial Gymnasium was to be the site of the new high school.[72] Protracted community discussion over the proposal delayed beginning construction until June, 1956. The first classes were held in the new high school in January, 1958, and formal dedication took place on April 20 that year. At a cost of $1,175,000 plus over $784,000 in interest, Rushville had a model high school "designed for living and for learning to live."[73]

The three-acre building on the Memorial Park land contained six educational units. Unit A incorporated shorthand, bookkeeping, typing, biology, physics, chemistry, and three allied business education classrooms. Unit B included administrative offices, a health clinic, and a teachers' workroom. Kitchen facilities and storage, girls' locker facilities, clothing instruction area, rest rooms, the main school lobby, and a spacious library were housed in Unit C. Unit D contained a multipurpose room that would seat approximately seven hundred for convocations and could also be used for girls' physical education classes and community gatherings. Unit E had music rooms including a band shell, individual and combination practice rooms, and a recitation room. A food laboratory, demonstration home, school bookstore, and receiving and storage space were also in this unit. The agricultural rooms, a farm shop facility, and general wood and metal shop areas were located in Unit F. The architects made provision in the design and construction of the school to allow for future expansion, particularly the addition of an auditorium.[74]

[69] "Plan for Reorganization," p. 12; *Rushville School Building Survey*, pp. 64, 66, 94; Milroy *Press*, April 13, 1933. The figures cited are for Milroy in the early 1930s.

[70] Rushville *Republican*, May 22, 1942, September 3, January 22, 30, 1943.

[71] *Ibid.*, March 22, 23, 1955.

[72] *Ibid.*, December 7, 1943, February 16, 1944.

[73] *Ibid.*, June 8, 1956, January 18, April 18, 21, 1958.

[74] *Ibid.*, July 20, 1955, February 15, 1956.

Expansion and improvement of the curriculum and facilities of the Rushville city system brought changes in the faculty as well. From 45 full-time teachers in 1945 the faculty expanded to 60 by 1960. The township schools faculty size also increased from about 90 in 1945 to 144 in 1960. Since the 1920s the number of faculty in all schools had increased 69 percent from 121 to 204, while enrollment had increased only 22 percent from 4,018 to 4,898. The level of teacher education also increased. All the high school teachers in the county in 1960 had college degrees (and many had advanced degrees) while slightly over half of the elementary teachers had degrees. Teacher salaries also improved. In the mid-1940s median salaries had ranged from $1,750 (elementary) to $2,050 (high school); by the mid-1950s they ranged from $3,000 to $5,500.[75] Expansion of facilities, improvement in curriculum, increase in faculty size, improvement of teacher training, along with salary increases, all contributed to an escalation in the cost of education. In the Rushville city system average annual cost per pupil increased to $404.53 in 1960 while for the township schools the average cost increased to $387.55 per pupil.[76] Since a significant portion of the township pupil cost went for transportation, the actual amount spent primarily for education was even less compared to the Rushville city system than the figures suggest.

Even though the costs of education in the township schools had increased almost 290 percent since the 1920s, their systems in the 1960s needed considerable improvement to meet first-class standards. Many of the older buildings were in need of repairs and modernization, and even some with new additions had questionable utility. Only five corporations had added new classrooms or gymnasia in the last thirty years. In 1960 the county's school reorganization committee rated the thirteen township school buildings on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 = poor,

[75] *Rushville School Building Survey*, pp. 58, 94; Rushville *Republican*, August 29, 1959; "Plan for Reorganization," pp. 10, 18, 19.

[76] "Plan for Reorganization," p. 21.

Have Books, Will Travel

By Gina Evans, grade 7

January 17, 1958, dawned a new day and a new beginning for Rushville High School students as they entered the Graham High School building for the last time.

Everyone had mixed feelings upon leaving the fifty year old building. Fear of being "lost" in a new sprawling structure—after the more compact one they were used to with its old halls, library, study hall and classrooms—was in each one's mind. Students were elated, however, that all "little junior high" kids would be left at Graham!

As the actual moving time came closer, everyone was told to clean his locker and get all personal belongings. New locker combinations were given, and all were told that at no time was any student to walk on the mosaic which everyone had heard about and was anxious to see.

My mother was a freshman and said she was very excited as she and her classmates had to wait their turn while the seniors of 1958 and other upperclassmen left for the journey to Park Boulevard and their new home. She said it was quite a sight to see! Everyone with arms loaded—girls in pony tails, pageboys, and floral buns dressed in crinolines, bobby sox, saddles, and flats; boys with flat tops and ducktails wearing plaid shirts and pegged pants—was excited and worried about finding his or her new locker!

At last students reached the new facility and, as they entered the doors, viewed the multi-colored mosaic which depicts the enlightenment of man through education.

To everyone's surprise, students and teachers soon adjusted and felt quite at home at their new address.

Since mother was a member of the first freshman class, she feels honored that they, along with the other three classes, selected some of the items to be placed in the cornerstone.

2 = fair, 3 = good, and 4 = excellent. In their appraisal they rated one as poor, nine as fair, three as good, and none as excellent. All six of the township high schools were combined in the same building with the elementary grades, while the remaining seven township buildings housed grades one through eight. The elementary grades taught phonics and the practical arts only to a limited degree and no foreign languages. Only five of the high schools taught home economics, and only one offered industrial arts. No township high school offered a college preparatory course. Ten of the township systems had libraries, and eleven had visual aids, but only five provided guidance counseling and school health services. Faced with declining enrollment, increased demand for educational services, a need for new and improved facilities, increased per capita student costs, plus the pressure to consolidate on the one hand and the natural desire to retain their community schools on the other, it is little wonder that many in the county vacillated on the consolidation issue.[77]

If those who supported consolidation of the school system thought it would reduce the costs of education, they were doomed to disappointment. Though enrollment declined after 1969, costs did not. Consolidation required expansion of Rushville High School from a capacity of about 850 to 1,500 students. Construction of a $1,194,000 addition began in February, 1967, and was completed in March, 1968.[78] The curriculum continued to expand with the addition not only of "new math" but also "new" physics, biology, chemistry, English, and social studies. The number of teachers rose to 225 and their salaries ranged from $6,500 to $11,025 a school year.[79] In 1942 the Rushville city school system spent a total of $102,323 on education. In 1975 Rushville Consolidated Schools spent a total in excess of $3,831,000 on education. The proposed budget for 1976 ran in excess of $4,381,000. The total per pupil expenditure for 1975 amounted to $929.52, or a 903 percent increase over what Rushville city schools had spent per pupil in 1944.[80]

World War II and its aftermath not only conditioned people to expect more from the community in the form of education, it also conditioned them to expect more in the form of other community services as well. From water to police protection, demand rose for improved service. The Rushville Chamber of Commerce reported that sizeable industries had turned a cold shoulder to the city as a possible factory site when they learned the community could not support a big water-using plant.[81] They not only wanted more water, they wanted better quality water. In addition, discoloration of drinking and laundry water by iron rust irritated many housewives. In the early 1950s some consumers found their water "so loaded with iron rust that it had the color of maple molasses. A pint jar of the stuff produced a quarter-inch layer of iron settling on the bottom." The water was so bad that consumption actually declined during the decade of the 1940s, from 146 million gallons in 1940 to 117 million gallons in 1950, even though the city's population had increased 13 percent.[82]

The twin problems of insufficient supply and poor quality water stemmed from poor wells and an outdated waterworks plant. In part, these deficiencies resulted from the fact that 80 percent of the city's water customers paid only the 65 cent monthly minimum charge that had not changed since 1916. Rate increases ameliorated the problems that had plagued the community for years, but it did not eliminate them. The city drilled an additional well in 1953 and constructed a new

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13, 16-18.

[78] Rushville *Republican*, October 5, 1966, February 8, 1967, March 9, 1968.

[79] *Ibid.*, March 7, August 22, 1968, August 6, 1969.

[80] *Ibid.*, August 15, 1942, August 6, 1975; *Rushville School Building Survey*, p. 64. Educational costs have continued to escalate during the past decade. The 1984 general fund budget for Rushville Consolidated Schools amounts to $7.1 million for an enrollment of 3,222, or just over $2,200 per student. Information supplied by Donald E. Smith, superintendent of Rushville Consolidated Schools, June 7, 1984.

[81] Rushville *Republican*, September 26, 1950.

[82] *Ibid.*, August 10, 1953, October 23, 1954.

$495,000 water system in 1958. The improved system included a new water treatment plant, a 96,000 gallon capacity clear well, two 1,000 gallon per minute pumps, three automatic softeners, and a 500,000 gallon elevated storage tank. Though the new system greatly improved the quality of the water, insufficient supply remained an endemic problem. At one point in 1961, because the main well had given out, the water supply reserve fell to less than one half of what was considered safe. In 1968 only four of the city's six wells were functioning, which led City Utility Superintendent Everett Harbaugh to declare, "If one of these four wells should suddenly break a shaft or go down for any other reason, I'm out of business."[83] Though the city's water supply system never completely broke down, the problem of periodic interruption in service continued.

Demands for improved garbage collection, sewage disposal, and trash disposal also created community problems, but all paled in comparison with the problem of the need for electrical power. The postwar rise in the use of electricity by home and industry brought a dramatic increase in consumption. In the eleven years from 1948 through 1958 consumption of electrical energy in Rushville increased 89 percent, from 11,449,000 kilowatt hours in 1948 to 21,635,000 kilowatt hours in 1958.[84] Prior to 1950 the city plant often produced surplus power that it sold to Southeastern Indiana Power Company before Southeastern was sold to Public Service Company of Indiana (PSI). Increased power demands in the early 1950s erased this surplus and began to produce shortages requiring the plant to purchase power from PSI. The *Republican* reported laconically in 1955, "Rushville's use of electricity has simply outgrown the plant."[85]

[83]*Ibid.*, September 27, 1950, May 5, 1953; City of Rushville, Council Record, Book 17, January 1, 1952, to December 31, 1959, Ordinance No. 1004, City Treasurer's Office, City Hall; Rushville *Republican*, July 22, 1958, February 27, 1961, December 31, 1968.

[84]Rushville *Republican*, May 1, 1959.

[85]Council Record, Book 16, January 1, 1939, to December 31, 1951, Ordinance No. 900A; Rushville *Republican*, September 28, 1955.

Few in the community realized this, however, until a $75,000 fire at the plant in 1955 led to the issuance of a previously unreleased 1954 engineer's report that indicated the plant needed $2 million worth of improvement and expansion. One of two things had to be done—either discontinue the manufacture of electrical power and purchase electricity from PSI, or float a $2 million bond issue to bolster the producing capacity of the city-owned plant. As is often the case when choice is involved, one group emerged that favored purchasing power from PSI, and another emerged that advocated rejuvenation of the existing plant. The former included the Chamber of Commerce and city officials. The latter included a majority of residents (who favored improvement and expansion by a margin of two to one) and the newspaper, which took its stand in an editorial entitled "Hold Fast To That Which Is Good."[86]

To buy power or to improve and expand became an issue that dragged on for years. In a surprise move in 1957 the city council unanimously passed two ordinances to resolve the issue. One ordinance provided for the issuance of $2,105,000 in revenue bonds for plant improvement and expansion; the other provided for an electric rate increase to ensure adequate funds for bond retirement. A citizens committee made up of those who opposed expansion effectively thwarted the action of the council by filing a law suit in Rush circuit court that halted bidding on construction bonds.[87] Faced with extended litigation the only viable alternative for those favoring expansion was to expand gradually by financing through the plant's electrical reserve funds and anticipated income. By this means, in 1960 a $344,000 building program increased the plant's generating capacity from 3,700 to 5,312 kilowatts. The expansion was expected to take

[86]Rushville *Republican*, September 19, 28, October 11, 13, 20, 1955.

[87]*Ibid.*, April 3, June 15, 1957; Council Record, Book 17, July 1, 1958.

care of the electrical needs of the community for only the next three to five years.[88]

The city council began quietly exploring the possibility of selling the light and power plant to PSI as early as November, 1965. Then in May, 1967, in a move that "was obviously the result of secret negotiations," the council on first reading approved an ordinance authorizing the sale.[89] In return for the plant and its distribution system, Public Service Company of Indiana agreed to pay the city $2 million for the light and power plant and an additional $200,000 for vehicles and other equipment. A public petition failed to halt the sale because it was short five names, and the transaction was completed in December, 1967.[90] PSI began operation of the Rushville electric system on May 1, 1968. The city deposited the $2.3 million that it finally realized from the sale in two local banks to be invested in government bonds as an income for the city. The mayor pledged that only the income from the money would ever be spent for city expenses. "We feel that by using the interest on the $2.3 million," he said, "we can pay many of the city's bills and avoid putting any additional burden on our taxpayers."[91] By the early 1970s the money from the sale of the light and power plant was earning annually over $160,000. The city had a new bill, however, for although PSI had once promised no increase in electric bills for ten years, Rushville now had to hire an Indianapolis law firm to fight PSI rate increases.[92] Not surprisingly, the effort to halt the rate increase proved quixotic.

The desire of the mayor to help the taxpayers with the "city's bills" was extremely praiseworthy, since their demand for services had caused those bills to rise dramatically in the three decades following World War II. In 1945, the services provided by the city's twelve departments cost the taxpayers some $130,000.[93] That cost increased gradually during the 1950s to about $280,000 in 1959, rose rapidly during the 1960s (reaching just over $500,000 in 1969), then skyrocketed to $1,155,000 in 1975. During these years the cost of city services had increased 782 percent while the population of Rushville (from 1940 to 1970) had increased only 12 percent. Two of the most costly city departments were police and fire. The budgets of each of these for 1975—police, $143,287; fire, $164,298—exceeded the total city budget in 1945.[94]

"Where is the crime wave?" that required all this police protection, asked Joe Pike, a bewildered resident, when assessing the police department in the late 1970s.[95] His bewilderment stemmed from the fact that the growth of the police department reflected not so much the need to combat a rise in violent crime as to combat the less sensational effects of alcohol and the automobile. In 1940 the police made a total of 118 arrests ranging from petit to grand larceny; public intoxication and disorderly conduct led the list, however, accounting for 31 percent of all arrests. Seventeen percent of all arrests were for automobile violations, and in addition the police investigated 126 traffic accidents. By 1959 the police made a total of 485 arrests, an all time high, and 345 (or over 71 percent) were arrests for traffic violations. In addition, the police investigated 244 traffic accidents and issued a total of 3,279 parking tickets, an important police activity after the introduction of parking meters in 1948. Among the 140 non-traffic related arrests public intoxication and disorderly conduct still led the list, accounting for 54 percent of all arrests. The total number of arrests hovered below the 400 level through the mid-1960s, then in a dramatic increase rose to 977 in 1970, an increase of 728 percent over

[88] Rushville *Republican*, December 8, 1959.

[89] City of Rushville, Council Minutes, Book 1, January 1, 1960, to August 25, 1969, p. 547, City Treasurer's Office, City Hall; Rushville *Republican*, May 3, 1967.

[90] Council Minutes, Book 1, p. 525.

[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 547, 608; Rushville *Republican*, October 15, 1973.

[92] Rushville *Republican*, October 11, 1955, October 15, 1973, November 19, 1975.

[93] *Ibid.*, August 8, 1945.

[94] *Ibid.*, August 5, 1959, July 2, 1969, July 30, 1974.

[95] Comment by Joe Pike to author, Summer, 1979.

1940. Though the police chief attributed the increase to Rushville being influenced by a national trend to violence, the automobile and alcohol still played a major role. The 522 traffic arrests amounted to over 53 percent of all arrests, and in addition the police investigated 236 traffic accidents and issued over 3,000 parking tickets. Non-traffic arrests increased to 455, but public intoxication and disorderly conduct still led the list in frequency of offenses.[96]

In 1940 a chief, four patrolmen, a merchant policeman, and one patrol car were enough to maintain law and order in Rushville. The city added two patrolmen, a two-way radio system linking the patrol car with headquarters, and a motorcycle equipped with a two-way radio in the 1940s. During the 1950s the city increased the size of the police force to include a chief, a captain, a sergeant, seven patrolmen, and a radio operator, and added a second patrol car. The city added an assistant chief, another captain, five more patrolmen, another radio operator, and a third patrol car during the 1960s. In addition, the force acquired other specialized police equipment, such as a Breathalyzer and radar equipment. By 1970 a police chief, assistant chief, two captains, twelve uniformed patrolmen, and two radio operators provided police protection for the residents of Rushville. In 1975 the city added a "meter maid" to the force just to deal with parking violations.[97] While the population had increased 12 percent, the size of the police department had increased 217 percent.

[96]Data collected from annual reports of the chief of police published in early January in the Rushville *Republican* from 1940 through 1966, and from data provided by the chief of police for the years 1969 through 1980. Unfortunately, similar data from the sheriff's department were available only on a random basis from newspaper publication of the sheriff's department reports, and the county sheriff was unwilling to provide information from his records.

[97]City of Rushville, Ordinance Record Book, No. 3, October 17, 1933, to July 11, 1961, pp. 109, 357, City Treasurer's Office, City Hall; Rushville *Republican*, December 6, 1950; Ordinance Record Book, No. 4, August 28, 1961, to November 15, 1977, p. 285; Rushville *Republican*, February 26, 1975.

The increase in the size of the police department and the amount of equipment needed naturally increased the costs of police protection. In 1944 a patrolman earned $1,500 a year, and the chief $1,920, with the total cost of police protection amounting to $10,500. By 1970 the chief earned $7,440 a year, the assistant chief $6,960, a captain $6,600, a patrolman $6,000, and a radio operator $5,340.[98] In addition, fringe benefits, unknown in 1940, including a uniform allowance and support help, longevity pay, and a pension plan added in 1949, helped boost the police budget over the $100,000 level in 1971.[99] Thus, while arrests increased 727 percent and the size of the force increased 217 percent, the cost of police protection rose 854 percent between 1944 and the early 1970s.

As in the case of law breaking, every community faces the danger of fire, but unlike many communities its size Rushville chose to rely on a paid rather than a volunteer fire department. In 1944, when the budget for the fire department came to $16,000, it made 116 runs, of which 10 were false alarms. The total fire loss for the city that year was $8,671. At that time the department had a chief and eight firemen, and its equipment included a 1921 Seagrave pumper and a 1924 Ahrens-Fox pumper.[100] Over the next several decades the department increased both its manpower and equipment. In 1945 the city added a third fire truck and soon after two more fire fighters to the department. A new American LaFrance 1,000 gallon pumper replaced the 1921 Seagrave in 1951. The 28 year old Ahrens-Fox pumper, ruined in a wreck in 1952, was replaced by a new American LaFrance 65 foot aerial ladder truck with a 750 gallon per minute pumper. The new equipment required remodeling the fire station and adding personnel to the department. In the

[98]Rushville *Republican*, August 9, 1944, May 20, 1969.

[99]*Ibid.*, December 21, 1949, July 8, 1970. See also note 96.

[100]*Ibid.*, August 9, 1944, January 4, September 6, 1945.

decade of the 1950s the department increased to fourteen men including a chief, assistant chief, and twelve firemen.[101]

The department continued to grow in the succeeding decade despite the fact that department activity did not appreciably increase. In 1959 the department answered 141 calls, of which 20 were rural runs in Rushville Township. Total fire loss that year amounted to $53,546, which was six times that of the previous year. The cost to the city in 1959 for fire protection was $72,523. In 1967 the city replaced the 1951 American LaFrance pumper with a Midwest Fire and Safety Equipment 1,000 gallon pumper and retained the 1951 pumper for stand-by operation. During the 1960s the department expanded to include a chief, assistant chief, four captains, twelve fire fighters, three radio operators, and ten volunteers. A new $100,000 fire station was built in the early 1970s to house, in addition to other equipment, a township owned 1971 model 100 gallon tanker and a 1975 emergency rescue unit. Besides the fire fighting and rescue equipment the city maintained a fire alarm system with alarm boxes located throughout the city and 193 fire hydrants.[102]

Publication of an annual fire department report ceased after 1960, so it is impossible to say with any degree of accuracy whether the continued escalation of the cost to the taxpayers of fire protection was justified or not. What is known is that in 1944 fire protection cost the city $16,000, and in 1975 it cost $164,000—an increase of 925 percent.[103] Halting the publication of annual fire department reports after 1960 foreshadowed a similar end to the publication of such reports in the 1960s by other departments of city and county government. Just as the costs of government were reaching gargantuan proportions, a fog of silence descended over the public's right to know. Apparently the absence of annual reports caused little public concern, for the newspapers reported no indignant outcry or demand for a full accounting to the citizenry.

The changes in life and living in rural Rush County proved expensive and disturbing. The costs of all community services, from education to fire protection, increased substantially in the three decades following World War II. Perhaps even more importantly, the social stability of the rural community deteriorated. The loss of the cohesive influence of the community school was only a striking example of a general malaise. The sense of anomie and rootlessness long associated with urban society invaded rural society—witness the breakdown of the family (the traditional building block of society) and the rise in crime. Community members no longer controlled events; rather, as in the case of school consolidation or sale of the electric plant, they found themselves dragged along unwillingly by events. The postwar era substantially changed Rush County, and many of its residents did not like or understand the change. The once simple world of land and labor, friend and foe was gone. In its place had arisen a complex relationship of social forces over which the individual had little control.

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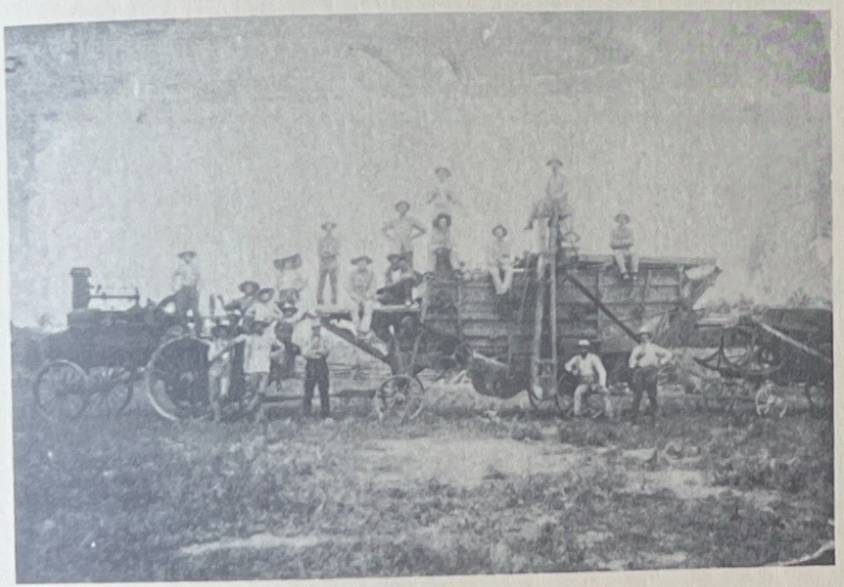
[101] *Ibid.*, February 7, 1945, March 18, 1953, September 3, 1969; Council Record, Book 17, p. 2050; Council Minutes, Book 1, p. 3; Rushville *Republican*, February 27, 1976.

[102] Rushville *Republican*, January 18, 1960; Council Minutes, Book 1, p. 467; Rushville *Republican*, September 3, 1969, October 17, 1968, March 31, 1969, February 27, 1976.

[103] Rushville *Republican*, August 9, 1944, January 11, 1961, July 30, 1974. Annual reports of the fire chief were published in early January from 1940 through 1961, *ibid.*



A Rush County threshing scene, 1937.

Chapter 5
A Time Of Troubles

In 1920 the farmers of Rush County stood closer to the agricultural ways of their grandfathers than to those their children would practice. Signs of the dramatic changes that lay ahead, however, had already begun to appear. Occasionally one saw a field of soybeans replacing the traditional stand of oats, or a truck mired in a road softened by recent rain. Here and there sounds of a tractor broke the stillness of morning air, and a few fortunate farm families no longer had to make the morning pilgrimage to the outdoor convenience. World War I had pushed farm prices to levels never before realized. Though prices declined somewhat by 1920, corn still brought $1.65 a bushel, wheat $3 a bushel, and hogs $17 a hundredweight. A popular saying of the day—$1 corn and $10 hogs make a living, $2 corn and $17 hogs make a good living—kept spirits high. Encouraged by such prices some anticipated an "era of unusual opportunity along agricultural lines."[1] Some farmers, a group not given to exaggerated enthusiasm, later remembered the 1920s as their best years.[2] Dark clouds lay on the horizon, however, and the 1920s began a long downward trend for county agriculture.

Most farmers had reason to hold an optimistic view in 1920. God had been good not only to Indiana in general but to Rush County in particular. The county contained 409 square miles (or 261,760 acres) of rich, fertile soil that early farmers had preserved by practicing methods of agriculture suited to both the soil and climate. The low relief of the land, gently sloping to the southwest, provided both good drainage and ground readily adaptable to mechanization. The climate provided an average

[1]A.L. Gary and E.B. Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County, Indiana* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1921), 1:90.

[2]Rush County panel tape, "Life and Living in the 1920s," June, 1978, in Rushville Public Library.

frost-free growing season of 153 days and an average annual rainfall of about forty inches. Since warm, moist summers characterized the climate, corn grew as well here as anywhere on earth. A United States Department of Agriculture soil survey of Rush County reported that "Agriculturally this county ranks among the richest counties in the United States."[3] Given the normal risks of agriculture, a farmer could make as good a living here raising corn and hogs as anywhere in the country.

Farmers in the county generally followed a three crop rotation—corn, wheat, and pasture grass. In 1920 the county's 2,044 farms planted 80,000 acres of corn, an average of just under forty acres per farm; 56,000 acres of wheat, an average of about twenty-six acres per farm; and 25,000 acres of hay and forage, an average of about twelve acres per farm.[4] Most farms (1,999) had domestic animals. Since farming depended almost exclusively on animal and human power for production, horses were common. The average number of horses per farm was five and about every fourth farm had a team of mules. An average of three beef cattle (including calves as well as heifers and steers) and four dairy cattle were also found per farm. The 102,328 hogs raised made them the most common farm animal, averaging over fifty per farm. In 1920 the total value of hog production approached two million dollars.[5] Since the county used only 7,169 tons of artificial fertilizer, or an average of three and a half tons per farm, domestic animals provided a major source of natural fertilizer.[6]

The small family farm that prided itself on self-reliance and independence characterized Rush County agriculture. Fully 57 percent of its farms were owner-operated, while just over 40 percent were operated by tenants and only about 3 percent were operated by farm managers. The average farm contained 123.8 acres (of which 108.9 acres were improved) and had a capital investment in land and buildings of $23,943 per farm. Owner-operated farms tended to be smaller, averaging 115 acres with 101 acres of improved land and a capital investment of $22,154 in land and buildings. Manager-operated farms were the largest, averaging 187 acres with 168 acres improved and a capital investment in land and buildings of $38,116. Farms operated by tenants fell between the two. Such farms averaged 134 acres with 117 acres improved and a capital investment of $25,849 in land and buildings.[7]

Of the 1,164 owner-operated farms fully 65 percent (755) were mortgage free, and the number was increasing. More farmers paid off their mortgages (260) in 1919 than took out new ones (234). New farm mortgages went largely for additional acreage and improved farm implements necessitated by changes in farming methods.[8]

The change in farming methods had begun even before 1920, as shown by the growth of investment in farm machinery between 1910 and 1920. In 1910 Rush County farmers had only $587,176 invested in farm implements and machinery; by 1920 investment amounted to $2,172,235, almost a four-fold increase during the decade.[9] The increase marked acceptance not only of newer, more efficient traditional farm equipment, such as cultivators and manure spreaders, but also commitment to innovative farm machinery as well. Rush County farmers were not dragged kicking and screaming into the technological age. They embraced it eagerly, partly out of their natural attraction to mechanical things, and partly out of necessity. Most farms

[3]C.S. Simmons, *Soil Survey of Rush County, Indiana* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Series 1930, No. 44), pp. 3, 6, 8.

[4]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, p. 358.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 349.

[6]"Report of the Co-operative Crop Reporting Service for Indiana," Indiana *Year Book*, 1920, p. 942.

[7]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, p. 340.

[8]*Statistical Report of the Legislative Reference Bureau of the State of Indiana for the Year Ending September 30, 1920* (Indianapolis, 1921), p. 1265.

[9]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, p. 340.

depended on some hired labor, but by 1920 farm labor was becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain. Many turned to machines to supplement the dwindling farm labor supply. In Rush County, at least, machinery did not cause the flight of farm labor; the flight of farm labor prompted increased dependence on the machine.

One of the first, if not the first, tractor demonstrations was held on the F.G. Hackleman farm in March, 1918. The demonstration included Moline, Cleveland, Fordson, Heidler, Happy Farmer, Case, Indiana, and International Harvester tractors. Part of the demonstration required each tractor to plow eight inches deep. Upwards of 1,200 people attended the two day affair.[10] The Rushville *Republican* explained the considerable interest when it reported that many farmers were compelled to buy tractors and other modern equipment to meet the labor shortage. Industrial centers offering higher wages and shorter hours proved more attractive to young men than farm work.[11] By 1920 there were about 200 tractors in the county, including a Titan 10-20 that operated on kerosene and boasted being able to "do the work of 9 horses, 9 sets of harness, 3 men, and 3 sulky plows."[12]

While the farm tractor was still largely a luxury, the farm automobile had become a necessity. By 1920 there were 1,635 automobiles on the county's 2,044 farms.[13] The automobile almost entirely supplanted the family driving horse. Even home comforts gave way to the desire for an automobile. The value of automobiles listed for taxation in 1921 exceeded by almost $150,000 the total taxable value of household goods.[14] The

[10]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, November, 1917, to December, 1918, typescript in Rush County Cooperative Extension Service Records, Rush County Courthouse.

[11]Rushville *Republican*, May 11, 1920.

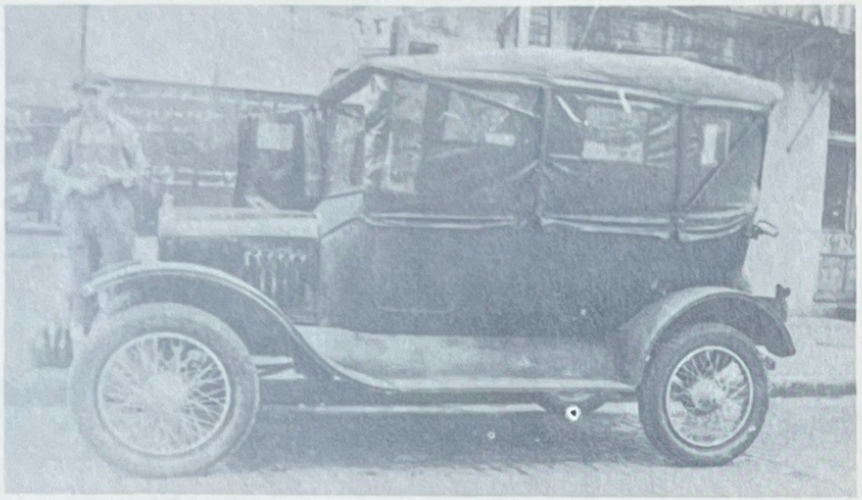
[12]*Ibid.*, March 16, 1920; Indiana *Year Book*, 1920, p. 917.

[13]"Report of the Co-operative Crop Reporting Service for Indiana," Indiana *Year Book*, 1920, p. 917.

[14]Rushville *Republican*, April 29, 1921.

Wilbur Gray and Frank Warrick looking at a breaking plow, Rush County, 1920s.

Warrick on his John Deere tractor with the first pneumatic rubber tractor tires in Rush County.



A 1918 Model T Ford with the first balloon tires in Rush County and with side curtains.

A five horse hitch on the Chester A. Anderson farm, 1936.

automobile provided mobility that the horse and buggy could not approach. Travel to town and to other farms on buying trips, and for social and recreational purposes, greatly increased the farmers' freedom.

The Model T introduced rural Rush County to the automobile. Most automobile manufacturers made a product for an urban market and did not meet the needs of users of country roads. The rugged, moderately priced Model T was admirably suited to the graveled and unimproved roads that dominated the county. Until 1920 the county's 400 miles of rural roads had no macadam, concrete, or brick surfaces, but were either gravel (328 miles) or unimproved (75 miles).[15] The first concrete road in the county was begun in 1920 from Rushville to the Shelby County line west of Arlington along what was known as the Indianapolis pike.[16] Only as they prospered and road surfaces improved did farmers gradually abandon the Model T for more stylish cars.

While the advantages of the automobile over the horse and buggy were immediately apparent, those of the truck over a team and a wagon were not. The seasonal nature of bulk shipping and the uneven quality of road surfaces were probably the determining factors. Whatever the cause, there were only 102 trucks on farms in the county in 1920.[17]

Electricity, like the truck, was more a luxury than a necessity. In 1920, only 94 farms purchased electricity, and only 146 farms used portable electric power. A popular make called Delco-Light ran on kerosene, supplying portable electric current for lights and water pumps.[18] The kerosene lamp still provided the most common form of light, as it had for over half a century. Gasoline engines (1,030) supplied the most common

[15]Rush County File, Federal Writers Project (WPA), Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute.

[16]Rushville *Republican*, March 22, 1920.

[17]"Report of the Co-operative Crop Reporting Service for Indiana," Indiana *Year Book*, 1920, p. 917.

[18]*Ibid.*, pp. 917, 921; Milroy *Press*, June 10, 1921.

form of auxiliary power, mainly for operating water pumps and the 816 washing machines in use on farms. Most farm wives washed clothes in the old cradle washers.

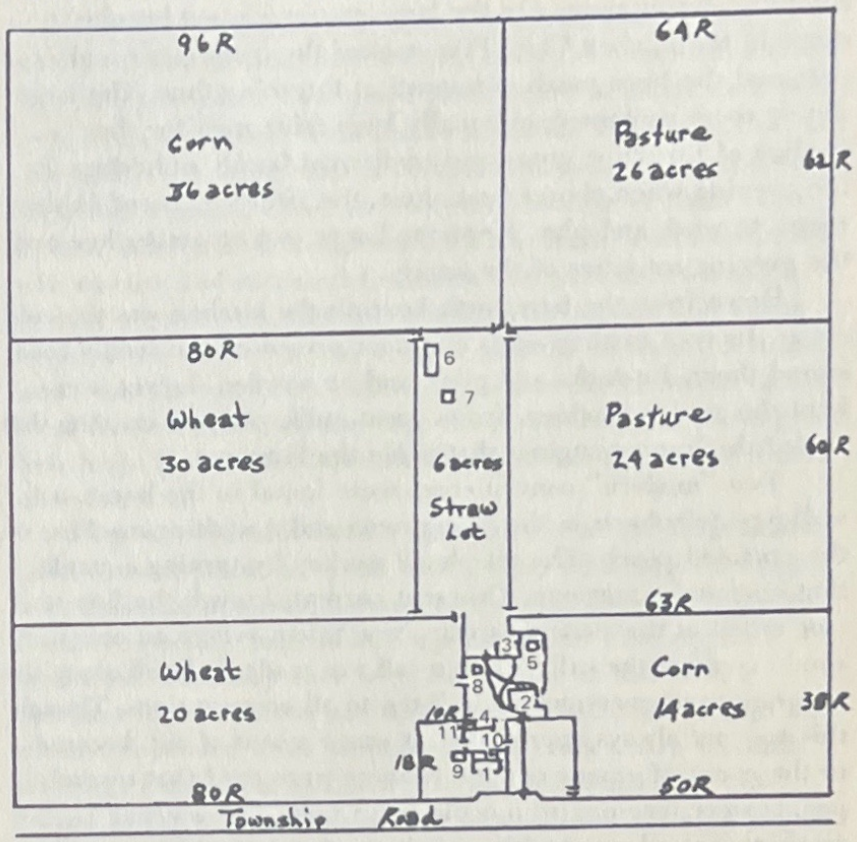
Other luxuries included inside plumbing, central heating, modern cooking stoves, and milking machines. Of the 2,044 farms only 472 had bathrooms while 629 had kitchen sinks. Running water was more often found outdoors than indoors. Central heating was more common than inside plumbing, with 608 farm houses heated either by hot air (314), hot water (248), or steam heating plants (46). Cooking was still done most often on cast-iron wood burning stoves; only 968 farms had gasoline or oil burning stoves. Though almost every farm had milk cows, only 48 had milking machines, but 827 had cream separators.[19]

The 160 acre Joseph H. Pike farm (shown in Figure 6) in Richland Township, although not statistically average, can be viewed as representative of county farms.[20] The focal point of the farm was the unpretentious brick house (1) that had been on the land when Pike purchased it in 1901. Built with the shallow pitched roof of the Federal style of architecture the house was old even then. Inside, the house had a living room and three bedrooms in the two-story portion and a dining room, kitchen, and pantry in a one-story addition extending to the rear. Though the house had four fireplaces in the original portion, none was used. Instead a "Splendid Stewart" base burner provided heat for the living room, the dining room had a barrel-type wood stove, and a wood burning range furnished heat for the kitchen. The bedrooms obtained what heat they could from these sources. In the winter lots of blankets and feather beds made sleeping comfortable, but waking meant a hurried trip to the warmth of the kitchen.

[19] "Report of the Co-operative Crop Reporting Service for Indiana," Indiana *Year Book*, 1920, p. 917.

[20] The following description of the Joseph H. Pike farm is derived from typed transcripts of interviews with Pike's son Gayle on July 23, 1979, and Pike's grandson Joe on July 25, 1978. The transcripts are located in the Rushville Public Library. See also Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 2:324-25.

Figure 6. Joseph H. Pike Farmstead, 1920



1. Farmhouse
2. Horse Barn
3. Cow Barn
4. Chicken House
5. Double Crib
6. Double Crib
7. Pump House
8. Pump House
9. Smokehouse
10. Coal House/Tool Storage
11. Privy

Gravel Driveway

R = rods

N

Year round family activity centered around the kitchen and adjoining dining room. On the large cast-iron wood burning range in the kitchen Clara Pike cooked the daily meals and prepared the huge meals consumed at threshing time. The large dining room contained an equally large table used for the feeding of threshing crews and traditional family gatherings. In the evening when chores were done, the family gathered in these rooms to work and play. Kerosene lamps cast an amber hue over the evening activities of the family.

Hewn from the bare earth beneath the kitchen was the cold cellar. Its cool earthen walls and floor preserved the family food stored there. In stacks and piles, and on wooden shelves, were kept the garden produce, fruits, meat, milk, and fall canning that fueled the human engines that made the farm run.

Two "modern" conveniences were found in the house, a wall-type telephone in the living room and a washing machine on the enclosed porch. The telephone worked by turning a crank that operated a magneto. This sent current through the line to ring a bell at the switchboard in New Salem, where an operator would connect the call. When a call was made, bells all along the line rang, and everyone could listen to all conversations. Though this was not always appreciated, it was a means of aid, because in the event of emergency the chances were good that several people were listening who could bring help. The washing machine was all wood with an agitator that looked like a milking stool. The agitator was powered by a gasoline engine, but the wringer was operated by hand as it had been on grandmother's cradle machine.

A well with a cast-iron pump and a cistern, both located outside of the house, provided household water. Since the house had no running water inside, water from the pump had to be carried inside for washing, cooking, bathing, and other household needs. Other wells, dug at several places on the farm, furnished water for the livestock, and a gasoline powered pump piped water to tanks for the hogs in the back sections. In summer the hog shades were sprinkled with water to keep them cool.

The buildings closest to the house were the smokehouse (9) and the coal and tool storage house (10). About a hundred feet from the north end of the house stood the chicken house (4). The incubator was kept in the farm house until the chicks were hatched. After hatching the chicks were kept in a brooder temporarily, from whence they were transferred to the chicken house. The care and raising of the chickens was the special preserve of Mrs. Pike and the children. The "butter and egg money" it provided was used for the purchase of groceries, such as soap, sugar, and crackers, from a huckster wagon that operated out of New Salem. Next to the chicken house (11) was a small structure, identified by a number of rural names, that in the absence of indoor plumbing was a necessary although uncomfortable feature of the family farm.

Beyond the dooryard stood the barn lot in which were located the horse barn and a double corncrib. The horse barn (2), like all the outbuildings on the farm, was painted white. It was the largest of the barns and was built on level ground. The west end had an earth floor and contained stalls for seven horses. It contained a special box stall for colts, which was also used for lambing. The center portion of the barn had a cement floor where farm implements were stored and where the family kept its prized Model T that Pike had bought in 1912. On the east end was a corncrib. The large mow above was filled, by fall, with loose hay, as well as straw that had been baled for the Pikes.

The north side of the cow barn (3) was used for milking (cows were not ordinarily fed in the barn). On the west side grain for feeding and seed grain were stored. The small grain crops stored here were needed for winter feed: horses ate corn and oats, chickens ate wheat, and cows needed oats and barley, as well as corn. On the east side there was a section, in the event it was needed, where sows could be brought in out of the

weather to have their litters. The mow above this barn was also used for hay storage.

The double corncrib (5) was large enough that a wagon could be driven inside and unloaded. There were openings at the top of the crib into which corn could be shoveled.

The entire barn lot was grassed, with gravel driveways connecting the barns with the straw lot and the horse pasture. In order to keep this area neat and clean pigs were kept out, and no hog wallows were allowed.

A distinguishing though not unique feature of the farm was the straw lot, a rectangular area six acres in size. Here the threshing was done and here, too, the pigs and other stock were kept. At the rear was another double corncrib with a capacity of about 4,000 bushels (6) similar to the one in the barn lot. Gates from the straw lot led to all the fields except the small one adjacent to the barn lot, so that livestock could be turned into any of the fields after the crops had been harvested. Six fields totalling 150 acres surrounded the straw lot (see Figure 6). The fields were used in pairs for the rotation of crops, with each pair totalling fifty acres.

The traditional crop rotation of corn, wheat, and pasture grass was followed. Before the widespread use of chemical fertilizers, farmers depended on crop rotation and natural fertilizer to sustain the richness of the soil. The Pike farm followed the practice of scattering ears of corn over the pasture fields with a manure spreader. Then the hogs were turned into the fields and moved across the field as they fed, making their deposits to nature. Hog manure was supplemented with that from the horse and cow barns.

Although the word "capital" was foreign to the traditional farmer's vocabulary, the Pike farm represented a sizeable capital investment. In 1901, when Pike purchased the 160 acres in Richland Township, the value of land and improvements was $5,310. By 1920 the value of land and improvements had risen to $32,040.[21] Farmers still produced much of what they consumed, but farming had become mainly commercial, and success depended on how much profit could be made each year. Corn, hogs, and wheat were the combination Pike hoped to turn into profit. The three made a complimentary mix. To feed out a single hog required about ten to twelve bushels of corn. Corn drained soil fertility, and it needed dark, loamy earth enriched with manure and chemical fertilizers and plowed-down sod to produce a good crop. Careful rotation with pasture and wheat prepared the soil for a year of corn, and the necessary fertilizer came from the manure spreader, as well as the chemical factory. The Pikes consumed all the corn raised on the farm feeding out their hogs. If more was needed, they purchased it locally from other farmers.

Hogs were ideal livestock for small farms. No farm animal could convert grain into meat with greater efficiency. It was a risky business, however, because of the ever present danger of disease—especially hog cholera, against which Pike regularly vaccinated. This may have been the reason he had such a penchant for cleanliness and orderliness. The breed of hogs he selected depended more on personal preference than scientific evidence. Pike never specialized in any particular hog, but Poland China was his favorite. He began in the spring going all over the surrounding country buying shoats—three, four, five, a dozen, twenty at a time—until he had a herd together. A herd was usually between 300 and 350 pigs. He fed the herd corn and tankage through the summer and into fall when he marketed them weighing about 250 pounds each. In the days before farm trucks, he hauled the fat, waddling creatures to Rushville on flatbed wagons enclosed with stock racks. From there they were shipped by rail to Indianapolis.

Raising hogs allowed a degree of flexibility in marketing. Pike watched the market very closely until he saw what he thought was the best price, and then moved his hogs to market.

[21]Transfer Book, 1919-1923, County Auditor's Office, Rush County Courthouse.

While watching the daily market prices he would feed his hogs out to 200 or 250 pounds. If they got as big as they were going to get, however, then feeding them corn was a waste of money. Hence much of his success depended on his ability to guess when to move his hogs. Too soon would mean missing the best market price; too late would mean wasting money on corn that was not converted into meat.

Wheat, like corn, drained fertility from the soil and needed the organic matter and nitrogen contained in manure. Pike sowed his wheat in the fall while the cornstalks still stood in the fields. A farm implement called the "Hoosier Corn Turner" developed by A.L. Stewart, a county farmer, assisted the planting. The ground generally produced about twenty to thirty bushels of wheat to the acre. This was a cash crop that allowed Pike to buy feed, extra corn, and tankage for his hogs.

A stern regimen of daily tasks and seasonal jobs set the pace of activity on the Pike farm. A normal work week was sixty to seventy hours, a trifle less in winter, a bit more in summer, and included two or three hours on Sunday when feeding and milking still had to be done. The labor force consisted of two adults (no one could exclude Mrs. Pike from the rural work force) and five children of various ages. In addition, from the first of March until Thanksgiving several hired hands supplemented the family's labor. The inexorable daily work began at 4:00 a.m. and lasted until 6:00 p.m., with a lunch break from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The day began with milking and feeding the cows, clearing the stalls of waste and manure, and slopping the hogs. The same ritual had to be repeated before suppertime in the evening.

Nature set the seasonal cycle, which started to unfold sometime in March when the snow began to melt. The first field work of the season was to sow timothy, clover, or other grasses before the soil was warm enough to plant corn. Planting followed a strict rotation of grass, corn, wheat: fifty acres of grasses were sown over the land planted in wheat to be harvested in July; fifty acres of corn were planted on ground where the year before there had been pasture; and fifty acres of wheat were planted in the standing corn before it was husked.

Since plowing was unnecessary for wheat and the grain was planted with a seed drill in the standing corn, planting and cultivating corn was the most demanding task on the farm. First the land had to be plowed. For this Pike used a sulky turning plow pulled by three horses. Then the ground had to be disked to break up the clods of dirt. A horse-drawn mechanical corn planter dropping seed about 18 inches apart was used to traverse the field, planting corn in rows 42 inches apart as it went. Check rowing (i.e., keeping the rows of corn straight in both directions) was not practiced on the Pike farm. As the corn matured, a corn cultivator was used to keep the shoots of corn free of the ubiquitous weeds; the process had to be repeated about three times before the knee-high corn was no longer threatened. When the corn tasseled out, it was cultivated for the last time with a one-horse, one-row cultivator.

In late June, even before corn cultivation stopped, hay was ready for harvesting. Pike used a horse-drawn mower that trimmed off the hay as the horses pulled it across the field. With it, he could cut six acres in a ten hour day. The mowed grass was left lying until it cured; then a hay rake, drawn by two horses, gathered it into windrows, and two men followed along to pitch the hay into a hayrack, a flatbed wagon with standards at the front and back, that delivered it to the barn. At the barn a horse-drawn trip fork raised the hay to the mow.

Harvesting wheat also began in June. The goal was to have the wheat cut and shocked by the Fourth of July so the family could have the day off. A horse-drawn reaper cut the wheat and left it lying in the field. There it was bound and shocked and left to stand a week to ten days to cure. Threshing required a sizeable crew: eight or ten men with wagons to bring the bundles to the thresher; six or eight men in the field continuously loading the assembly line of wagons; a man to operate the steam engine;

and a man to operator the separator—usually the owner, who was paid about three to five cents a bushel. The men operating the wagon fed the threshing-separator machine located in the straw lot. The machine automatically measured out half a bushel of wheat at a time into a standing wagon, which when full carried the threshed grain away for storage. The blower on the separator fed the growing straw pile that gave its name to the lot. The noontime dinner for threshers was a folk custom that still conjures up fond memories.

After threshing the seasonal pace slackened, but work that had been neglected during the busy summer days now had to be done. In September the wheat was sown in the standing corn for the following year. The arrival of the shorter days of autumn meant cornhusking time, which could last from mid-October until late November. Corn was husked in the field and then hauled to the barnyard. When cornhusking was over, the field work for the year was about done. There remained one final task, to await a cold morning to break the cornstalks. This was done with a stalk pole about twenty feet across pulled by two horses. But even with the field work done, there were still hogs to butcher, firewood to cut and split, fences to mend, sheds and buildings to repair, and the ever present daily chores. When March came, the cycle began again.

For the Pike farm, as for most of the farms in the county, the early 1920s did not live up to the expectations held in 1920. An interim report of the United States Department of Commerce in 1925 indicated only 1,775 farms in the county compared with 2,044 just five years earlier. Some of the lost farms increased the acreage of existing farms. The average farm increased from 123.8 to 128 acres, but the actual number of acres in cultivation declined by almost 26,500.[22] Declining land values convey the sorry tale. Land that brought $300 an acre in 1920 sold for half that in 1925. Joseph Pike's 160 acres, valued in 1920 at $174 an acre, were valued at $106 an acre in 1925—a decline of over

[22]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1925), Pt. 1, pp. 418-19.

Tale of the Threshing Ring

By Lori Gordan, grade 5

The threshing machine was used to separate the grain from the straw. Whenever the wheat turned golden in July, the farmers would cut it. They used the machine called the binder to do this. They used a tractor to pull the binder through the wheat field. This machine cut the wheat close to the ground, and it would come through, tied in bundles. The farmers would lean some of the bundles together with the grain on top. This was called a wheat shock.

The threshing ring would move from farm to farm. When the threshing machine came to your farm, all your neighbors would come to the wheat field and pitch the wheat shocks on a wagon and haul them to the threshing machine.

The threshing machine would separate the grain from the straw. The grain would go into a wagon, and the straw would go into a straw stack. The farmers would sell the grain and used the straw to bed the animals.

The kids had fun sliding down the straw stacks. My mom remembers hauling water in a pony cart to the hot thirsty farmers.

When the threshing ring had been to all the farms and the threshing was done, all the farmers and their families would get together for an ice cream and cake party.

The end of the threshing ring came in the mid-forties.

$10,000 in value in five years.[23] In the county as a whole the average value of land per acre was $87.85. During these years the aggregate value of farm land declined more than 50 percent, from $42,162,950 to $19,899,771.[24]

Along with declining land values, mortgage debt increased. The aggregate debt for county farmers rose from $1,250,572 in 1920 to $1,484,553 in 1925. While the actual debt increased only 18.8 percent, because of decreasing land values the ratio of debt to land value almost doubled, rising from 21.2 percent to 40.3 percent. The average mortgage debt per acre in 1925 was $45.59.[25]

The decline in prices the farmer received for what he produced and the increased cost of what he purchased brought on the worsened condition of county agriculture. E. F. Brown, Rush County agricultural agent, contended in 1933 that "since 1922 the farmer has occupied a position at a distinct disadvantage over business and industry, because agriculture had failed to keep pace financially."[26] Hog prices reached a low of $7.89 per hundredweight in 1924, a low not reached again until the disastrous prices of the worst depression years of the ensuing decade. Corn and wheat had similar declines, averaging $.85 a bushel and $1.15 a bushel respectively.[27] A study of income prepared by the Indiana University Bureau of Business Research reported that in 1925 the average annual full-time income per male employee in agriculture was $672, compared to $1,300 in manufacturing.[28]

[23]Transfer Books, 1919-1923, 1925-1929.

[24]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1925), Pt. 1, pp. 432-33; *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, p. 340.

[25]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1925), Pt. 1, pp. 432-33.

[26]Rushville *Republican*, October 19, 1933.

[27]Howard J. Houk, *A Century of Indiana Farm Prices, 1841 to 1941* (Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 476, January, 1943), pp. 51, 56, 62.

[28]Milroy *Press*, March 30, 1926.

The frustration born of increasing debt and declining land values and farm prices fostered resentment toward middlemen and prompted efforts at farm organization. The Milroy *Press* reported the story of a farmer near there who asked a grocer in Rushville what he was paying for apples. The grocer offered the farmer three cents a pound, or $1.44 a bushel. That was the best price he would pay. Thinking the offer low, the farmer sent a friend into the same store to ask what was being charged for apples. He was informed ten cents a pound, which would be $4.80 per bushel or a profit of 233 percent.[29] Whether apocryphal or not the story reflected growing farmer resentment.

Such resentment stimulated membership in the Rush County Farm Bureau, founded in 1919. The original objective of the bureau was the promotion of social, educational, economic, and religious welfare among the community's farm population. From a membership of 766 in 1922, the bureau grew to 1,904 members in 1923.[30] Many farmers still felt there was no future in farming unless farmers organized to stabilize prices paid on products purchased and received on products produced; hence in February, 1924, they formed the Rush Service Bureau.[31] The Service Bureau allowed farmers to purchase feed, fence, seed, fertilizer, buildings, and other farm needs at reduced cost. County farmers further advanced their efforts at stabilization of prices on products purchased and produced in 1926 with the formation of the Co-Op Association in conjunction with the Farm Bureau. With little state or national concern for the plight of farmers, self-help offered the only solution to their problems. As W.E. Harton told the Rushville Rotary Club, "If the farmer ever gets any relief, he will have to work out his own problems and carry them thru [sic]. The farmer will work out his own problems because he has to."[32]

[29]*Ibid.*, September 16, 1920.

[30]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1923.

[31]Rushville *Republican*, December 6, 1930.

[32]*Ibid.*, July 6, 1926, October 22, 1940.

The dark clouds of the early 1920s began to break up when hog prices started to rise, averaging $11.81 per hundredweight in 1925.[33] The euphoria of 1919 did not return, but many farmers retained their faith in the land. Glenn Dolan, son of an Irish immigrant, bought his first land in February, 1924. Glenn's father, Patrick, who had come to America with his parents, had tenant farmed all his life but never owned any land of his own. With declining land values the son now had the opportunity to own his own ground. Dolan and others like him either took up land or expanded, displaying their faith in the county's agriculture.[34] In 1928 alone, 240 farm mortgages averaging $5,738 per mortgage were filed.[35]

With new farmers taking up land, the number of farms increased in 1930 to 1,875. The amount of land in farms also increased, as did the average size of farms. In 1925 land in farms amounted to 226,519 acres, or 86.5 percent of the county's land area. By 1930, 248,803 acres (95.1 percent) were in farms, which was better than 1925 but still below 1920. The average size of farms, however, had increased by almost nine acres, from 123.8 to 132.7, between 1920 and 1930. Farm indebtedness paralleled the increase in farm size. Of the 988 owner-operated farms, 480 (48.6 percent) carried mortgages averaging $2,828 per farm.[36] By 1930 many farmers had come to accept debt as a legitimate part of operating expenses. The Rushville *Republican* reported in 1929, "The man with a mortgage today thinks he is a pretty fine fellow, because he can command credit and because he knows that no black haired villain will come around on the date of maturity and demand his beautiful daughter."[37] For many farmers debt was the only way they could hope to improve their farming methods and achieve the standard of living enjoyed by their city cousins.

In part through credit buying, rural life became more mechanized. The automobile became a commonplace farm vehicle by 1930, with an average of 1.1 per farm. Since most of the 454 miles of county roads were graveled, many cars were no longer the ugly Model T but the more stylish Detroit products.[38] The number of motor trucks also increased, with the number more than tripling from 102 in use on farms in 1920 to 390 in 1930. The greatest numerical increase came in the number of tractors in use on county farms; their number increased from 204 in 1920 to 791 in 1930.[39] By then their advantages had broken down much of the resistance to them by older farmers. Gayle Pike remembers the first tractor, a Fordson, that he got for his father's farm in 1922. His father did not like the idea of getting a tractor because "he just didn't think it would do the job. And he told me," Gayle recalls, "if it don't do the job to suit me, you're not going to use it on my farm." After a plowing demonstration, however, his father judged it was doing "a pretty good job" and the tractor stayed.[40] The worth of the tractor was becoming obvious even to traditionalists like Joe Pike. One good man with a tractor and a two-bottom plow, the Milroy *Press* reported, could plow more ground in one day than three men and nine horses, and if necessary he could plow half the night while the man with horses had to quit to rest them. It cost about two dollars for fuel and oil, plus an operator's wages of a dollar and a half, making the cost three and a half dollars to run a tractor for ten hours. The feed for nine horses and wages for three men amounted to five and a quarter dollars.[41] The tractor,

[33]Houk, *A Century of Indiana Farm Prices*, p. 56.

[34]Gary and Thomas, *Centennial History of Rush County*, 2:204-5; Transfer Book, 1922-1925.

[35]Rushville *Republican*, January 21, 1929.

[36]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 488–89, 552–53.

[37]Rushville *Republican*, May 8, 1929.

[38]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, p. 561; Rushville *Republican*, January 2, 1931.

[39]"Report of the Co-operative Crop Reporting Service for Indiana," Indiana *Year Book*, 1920, p. 917; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 560-61.

[40]Transcript of Gayle Pike interview, pp. 17-18.

[41]Milroy *Press*, March 30, 1933.

From Horses to Tractors

By Richard Todd, grade 10

The method of farming changed in the mid-forties from plow horses to tractors. A gradual change was in the best interest for Rush County. Though some were unwilling to give up the loved plow horse, they had to. This was due to the lack of manpower as more men were forced to join the service.

The most common use of the horses was in teams which consisted of two horses. One team could be used up to eight hours a day, pulling a two-bottom twelve-inch plow. The horses which were used were well trained and knew what was expected of them. As I found out from my source, a man couldn't work with a horse he couldn't trust.

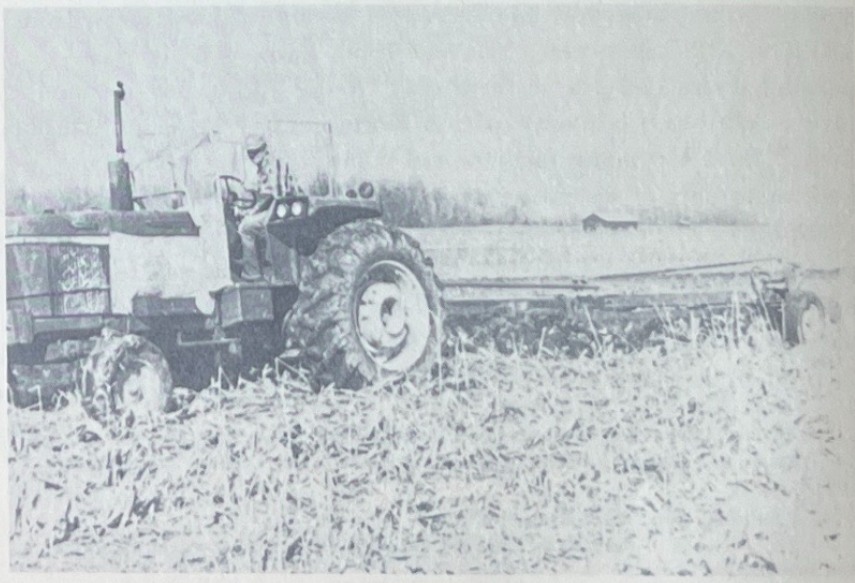
There were also three straps. Three straps were teams of three horses which could pull a three-bottom plow. This type of team could possibly work ten hours a day; much more would kill them.

As the war continued, farmers found it more economical to use the tractor. The tractor could out class the backward plow horse in almost every respect. It could work from sunup to sundown, and one only needed gas, which cut down on the cost of feed. One tractor could cover as much as five times the amount of land in the same amount of time.

As my father said, "About the only thing tractors couldn't do was fertilize your feet."

Information provided by George P. Todd.

A horse drawn corn planter.



A tractor on the Liggett farm.

besides being cheaper to operate and more efficient, also provided auxiliary power for threshing, corn shelling, and the generation of electrical current.

With the exception of mechanization, everyday farm living changed little over the decade. Only 135 farms purchased electric power. Most still relied on stationary gasoline engines (621), portable electric motors (63), or human and animal power for the daily chores. Most farms (1,467) had a telephone, but little more than a third (628) had running water in the house while only about one in seven (283) had inside plumbing.[42] Farm living remained much as it had in 1920.

Staple crop production also remained much the same—corn, wheat, and hogs. Almost every farm (1,737) grew corn. In 1929, 80,881 acres were planted in corn, which was a bit more than was planted in 1919 even though the price ($.87) was about half what it had been ten years earlier ($1.65). The reason for increased corn production was increased hog production. In 1930 county farmers produced considerably more hogs (132,455) than a decade earlier (102,328) and more than half again as many as 1925 (82,487). Compared with corn, hog prices had not dropped as much. Hogs that brought an average of $17.18 a hundredweight in 1919 were still bringing $10.14 in 1929. Even when farm prices hit bottom in 1932 and hogs sold for $3.77 a hundredweight and corn went for 22 cents a bushel, the ratio of corn to hog prices still favored hogs.[43]

Rush County hog producers divided into three classes—hog feeders, hog raisers, and purebred breeders. With feeders and raisers the practice was very much the same. The feeder went out into the market and bought young pigs, fed them, and when markets appeared right, shipped them off. His aim usually was to buy feeders in the early spring, feed them through the summer, and go to market in July, August, or September. During the summer months he needed less shelter, the pigs required less care, and the feeder had the benefit of pasture, which reduced feeding costs. Ordinarily, the hog raiser planned to go to market twice a year, in the spring with his fall pigs, and in the fall and early winter with his spring pigs. The purebred hog breeder was described as the "backbone of the hog industry" in Rush County. The purebred breeder differed from the feeder and raiser in that he supplied the foundation stock for the market pork producers. The aim of the breeder was to produce hogs with plenty of muscle and bone, the kind of pigs that later would be expected to carry pounds and pounds of weight. The most popular purebred breeds in Rush County included Chester Whites, Spotted Poland Chinas, Duroc-Jerseys, and Hampshires.[44]

Many farmers annually marketed from one hundred to three hundred hogs, and some over a thousand, at the markets in Indianapolis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Buffalo. In 1929, on the four farms he operated, Fred Bell had on feed 1,181 hogs that he marketed at an average of about 313 pounds each. He fed hogs on three of his farms and raised hogs on the fourth. He usually started his year's operations by buying corn in the fall and placing it in rail cribs in the field. In 1929 he began buying shelled corn for use in self-feeders. Bell estimated that to "feed out" a thousand hogs required about 14,000 bushels of corn. Bell originated a supplementary hog feed on which he experimented for several years. He described it as a "balancer" because it was used to balance the hog ration. Corn, which was deficient in protein, was supplemented by the "balancer" that included soybean meal, tankage, oil meal, alfalfa meal, cottonseed, middlings, limestone, bone meal, and salt.[45]

The common practice among hog feeders of a few years earlier had been to fatten them all and drive them off to market

[42] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 560-61.

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 508-9, 518; Houk, *A Century of Indiana Farm Prices*, pp. 55-56, 51. Russell Ruff, a local farmer, recalls selling hogs for as little as $2 a hundredweight and buying corn for as little as 12 cents a bushel.

[44] Rushville *Republican*, August 3, 1929.

[45] *Ibid.*, July 6, August 3, 1929.

at the same time. The practice generally used by 1930 was to spread the late summer and early fall marketing over the three months of July, August, and September. This aided the producer by relieving the early fall market of the hog glut that had long been one of its characteristics. The hog producer put his porkers on feed for six or seven months and trucked to market a product above 200 pounds. Trucking improved the quality of the hogs sent to market over the time when they were herded to market. As one feeder put it, "imagine driving one of the modern fat hogs seventy miles over rough roads." Operating hand in hand with the truck was the radio, an increasingly common appliance in farm homes. With the truck in service, the farmer could tune in early in the morning or at noon, learn the condition of the market, call in the truck, and get his hogs away that night, ready for the next morning's sales.[46]

Soybeans slowly joined the triad of county farm products in the 1920s. Farmers first planted them with corn for "hogging off." In 1920 there were about 300 acres devoted to soybeans with an average of about thirty farmers planting ten acres each. By 1930, 150 farms reported 1,029 acres grown alone and another 645 acres grown with other crops.[47] Rush County farmers turned to soybeans for several reasons: there was a need to increase legume acreage since only one acre in thirteen was growing clover or other legume crops; a considerable amount of the soil was not responding to applications of commercial fertilizer, and crop yields were standing still or getting lower, indicating that organic matter might be a limiting factor in crop production; and because the county was essentially a hog producing area and spent about $125,000 annually for commercial protein, there was a need for more homegrown protein.[48]

[46] *Ibid.*, August 3, 1929.

[47] Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1918, 1921; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 532-33.

[48] Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1922.

Adoption proceeded haltingly because the only way to really find out about soybeans was to try them. Planting soybeans with corn brought mixed, but generally unfavorable, reactions. The agricultural agent reported in 1926, "There is a general feeling among farmers that corn is injured to a certain extent when soybeans are planted in the row. Other farmers, however, still maintain that if soybeans are not planted too thick no damage results." Farmers who planned to "hog off" their corn began to divide their fields, sowing soybeans in one side of the field rather than in the corn rows.[49] This, however, cut into corn production, and rather than reduce corn acreage farmers gradually replaced oats with soybeans. Soybeans fit ideally into the corn, wheat, and pasture rotation since wheat could be drilled into the soybean stubble after the hay crop had been removed without plowing or preparing the seed bed. Farmers felt soybeans left the soil in "a mellow and splendid physical condition," and the stubble held the snow and shaded the ground helping to prevent the killing of winter wheat.[50]

The early years of the Depression temporarily halted the farm exodus that had marked the decade of the 1920s. In 1935 the number of farms in the county actually increased to 2,139, exceeding even the number in 1920. In the midst of the Depression 96 percent of the county's land area was in cultivation, but the average size of farms (116.9 acres) was smaller than 1920. As the severity of the Depression declined so too did the return to the farm. By 1940 the trends of the 1920s reappeared. The number of farms declined to 1,769, and the average size of farms increased to 142.1 acres. The decline in the value of land and buildings continued but at nowhere near the precipitous rate of the 1920s. In 1930 the aggregate value of land and buildings stood at almost half of what it had been in 1920, declining from $48,939,149 to $24,963,588. By 1940 the total value of land and buildings was $23,348,623, which was

[49] *Ibid.*, 1926.

[50] Rushville *Republican*, April 23, 1927.

almost $6 million above the value of 1935 but still about a half million dollars under 1930. County farmers also continued their commitment to technology and mechanization. The average farm had $1,040 invested in farm implements and machinery with a total value of $1,774,414.[51] This was a quarter million dollars more than in 1930.

Apparently the 1930s were not as devastating a period for county farmers as the 1920s. In 1920, 32.1 percent of the county's owner-operated farms reported mortgage debts; in 1930, 48.6 percent; and in 1940, 57.4 percent. Though farmer indebtedness increased during the 1930s, it increased at a slower rate than in the 1920s. Moreover, dollar indebtedness actually decreased by 1940 from what it had been in 1925. In the latter year it amounted to $1,484,553; in 1940, $1,479,270.[52]

Rush County appears to have avoided the hard times experienced in other rural areas particularly the Great Plains states. In late 1930 delinquent taxes in the county amounted to approximately $10,000, which the county auditor reported was "slightly less than the normal amount."[53] The figure increased almost fourfold to $38,000 in 1931, and continued to increase through the summer of 1934, when annual delinquency reached almost $50,000. Thereafter it began to decline and by the summer of 1935 was only about half that amount. In that year a total of $91,000 in unpaid taxes remained on the treasurer's books with $66,000 carried over from former years. By the end of 1939 the total amount of delinquent taxes had declined to $40,000 and the county treasurer reported "much of this sum represents old delinquencies."[54] Probably few full-time farmers lost their farms because of tax delinquency: first, because most of the delinquent tax was in Rushville city, owed by persons who were unemployed because factories and other industries were closed; second, although farm sales and auctions were held, in some cases not even one bid was received; third, beginning in 1933, retroactive to 1931, the state initiated a plan, repeated in 1935 and 1937, whereby payment of delinquent taxes could be spread out over a period of ten years; and finally, the Federal Land Bank increased the money loaned to county farmers to over 1.5 million dollars.[55]

In January, 1932, the county treasurer announced the sale for delinquent taxes of forty-three pieces of farm land ranging in size from 3 to 362 acres. He sold seventeen of these pieces of property, but apparently only three actually changed hands since they were the only ones for which deeds were later issued. The taxes owed on these three pieces of property amounted to $52.20 on 8.47 acres, $210.80 on 100.66 acres, and $256.02 on 106.62 acres. There were probably no further tax sales until 1936 because of the tax moratorium initiated in 1933. In January, 1936, the treasurer offered for sale fifty-four pieces of farm land ranging in size from 3 to 251.78 acres. Twenty-one were purchased at the sale, but transfer deeds were issued on only three: 30 acres in Noble Township on which $83.66 in taxes were owed; 5.8 acres in Anderson Township on which $85.41 in taxes were owed; and 70.13 acres in Noble Township on which $122.95 in taxes were owed. The other pieces were probably later redeemed by the owners since they retained the right of redemption until a deed was issued.[56]

No subsequent Depression years tax sales were as large as those in 1932 and 1936. In 1937 the treasurer posted thirty-eight pieces of farm land for sale, one with only $1.29 in tax due on

[51] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Agriculture*, I, Pt. 1, p. 554; *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, p. 340.

[52] *Ibid.*, *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, p. 363; *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Agriculture*, I, Pt. 1, p. 606; *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1925), Pt. 1, pp. 432-33; *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 552-53.

[53] Rushville *Republican*, November 8, 1930.

[54] *Ibid.*, December 2, 1931, December 8, 1932, June 2, 1933, June 10, 1935, November 27, 1939.

[55] *Laws of Indiana*, 1933, Chapter 30, 1935, Chapter 166, 1937, Chapter 2; Rushville *Republican*, March 9, 1937.

[56] Tax Sales Register, Vol. 1, 1853-1936, County Auditor's Office, Rush County Courthouse.

100 acres. Thirteen pieces were actually purchased, but only one (19 acres) had a deed transfer issued. In 1938 he offered twenty pieces of farm land for sale, of which four were purchased and only one (5.8 acres) actually deeded. In 1939 he listed twenty-six pieces for sale; seven were purchased, but none deeded. And in 1940 the treasurer posted for sale fourteen parcels of land with three actually purchased, all of which were redeemed.[57]

This review of extant records appears to indicate that only eight farms ranging in size from 5.8 acres to 106.62 acres were lost as a result of inability to pay taxes due on them. This does not present the whole picture, however, since farm land was also lost as the result of private indebtedness through sheriff's sales. In the first full year of the Depression there were only three sheriff's sales of farm land. The following year the number increased to six and reached ten in 1932 when the sheriff sold a total of 872 acres at auction with some purchased for as little as $22.86 an acre. In the next two years there was a decline in the number of sheriff's sales, nine in 1933, and four in 1934. In 1933 farmers lost 1,267 acres to the auctioneer's gavel and 337 acres in 1934. The year 1935 brought the peak of sheriff's sales when thirteen auctions were held totalling 1,771 acres. Thereafter through 1940 sheriff's sales averaged fewer than three a year. In all a total of forty-six sheriff's sales occurred during the decade, involving 6,304 acres. Thus, county farmers lost much more land through sheriff's sales than through tax delinquency sales. Insurance companies such as Prudential and Connecticut Mutual purchased much of the farm land sold at sheriff's sales.[58]

[57] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, 1940-.

[58] Order of Sale Docket, 1919-1942, County Clerk's Office, Rush County Courthouse. In addition to insurance companies, although not necessarily as the result of sheriff's sales, an increase in non-resident purchases of farm land also occurred. According to one study sixteen non-residents purchased 5,480 acres of land in Rush County during the 1930s. Included among the purchasers was Wendell L. Willkie, who acquired some 1,400 acres. Rushville *Republican*, March 23, July 9, 10, 1940.

Doubtless many farmers sold land or entire farms below their true value because of financial hardship, but the aggregate record indicates only fifty-four instances where farmers lost land because of inability to meet either tax or mortgage obligations. Those fifty-four amounted to only 5.5 percent of the 988 owner-operated farms in 1930. Some sales included entire farms. Chester O. Williams lost 110.56 acres of land valued at $4,000 and improvements valued at $1,700 because of failure to pay taxes amounting to $210.80. Others, like Ella Coon, temporarily lost their land and later regained it. Coon lost thirty acres in Noble Township to William Knecht, Sr., on a tax deed in 1938. The following year Knecht deeded the land back, presumably after having been paid the delinquent taxes plus interest. Still others like Hershel Daubenspeck, who gave up 127.5 acres to the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, lost only a portion of their land and retained enough to remain in farming.[59]

One reason why upwards of 95 percent of Rush County farmers who operated their own farms retained their land throughout the Depression was because of the limited extent of their mortgages. Almost half of the county's owner-operated farms were mortgage free in 1930. For those that were mortgaged the average amount of mortgage debt per farm was $4,190 ($42.14 per acre) while the average value of land and improvements per acre was $109.63.[60] Since the average amount of mortgage per acre was only 38 percent of the value of the land, farmers were able to sell their land at Depression prices rather than lose it. Equally important, the high equity prompted banks and insurance companies to "carry" debtors until conditions improved.

The farmers whose lands were mortgaged in 1930, and others who acquired mortgage debt as the Depression progressed,

[59] Transfer Book, 1932-1936.

[60] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 552-53. Of the 988 owner-operated farms in the county in 1930, 480 were mortgaged and 441 were mortgage free; the Census had no report for 67 farms.

were helped by the Federal Land Bank which by 1937 had loaned some 400 farmers about $1.6 million. From June 1, 1933, to May 1, 1934, alone, the Federal Land Bank and Land Bank Commissioners made a total of $532,000 in farm mortgage loans in Rush County of which $468,000 (88 percent) went to refinance indebtedness.[61] Before the Depression such loans had been based on 50 percent of the valuation determined by federal appraisers, but with the Depression the rule was changed and loans could be obtained for up to 75 percent of the appraised valuation. For a first-class farm in Rush County the appraised valuation was $80 an acre, hence $60 an acre was available through loans from the Federal Land Bank. The importance of the Federal Land Bank to Rush County agriculture is attested to by the fact that the county ranked seventh in the amount of loans received by all counties serviced by the Louisville branch of the bank.[62]

Further national government assistance to farmers came through the creation of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) as part of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. Through the CCC a producer of corn could obtain a government loan by putting his corn up as collateral. The money thus obtained could be used to hire labor or to purchase such items as seed, plants, feed, fertilizer, livestock, equipment, or to repay indebtedness incurred for such purposes. In Rush County the CCC had $180,000 with which to make loans and in late 1933 began providing farmers with much needed cash by loaning 40 cents a bushel on Number 2 corn.[63] The loan rate became a floor under the price of corn, which had dropped to 22 cents a bushel in 1932 and was still only 34 cents in 1933. The direct value of corn loans to county farmers may have been minimal because by 1934 corn averaged 58 cents a bushel, which was well above the corn loan price; but the loans obviously helped raise corn prices, since the commodity would not be commercially marketed for any amount less than the prevailing loan value.[64]

More significant than corn loans in assisting the farmers were the various production allotment policies promoted by the New Deal. The wheat allotment program was the first in which the county participated. It amounted to 415,260 bushels, or 54 percent of the county's average production for the three years preceding the implementation of the program. Wheat prices had plummeted with the onset of the Depression, and many farmers began feeding wheat to their hogs because of the low price, which reached an average of 41 cents a bushel in 1932. Wheat allotments paid to farmers averaged 66 cents a bushel under the program. By December, 1933, wheat acreage reduction checks totalling nearly $50,000 began to flow to some 803 farmers in the county. The program lasted three years and expired with the crop year of 1935. In May of that year, however, county wheat growers voted 862 to 171 in favor of continuing the subsidy.[65]

The vote of the wheat growers reflects the ambivalent attitude county farmers had toward government aid. On the one hand they wanted and needed the money provided by the wheat subsidy; on the other hand they resented the national subsidy policy's infringement on their independence. In 1935 when the wheat growers voted overwhelmingly to continue the allotment program, the county agricultural agent reported that only about 50 percent of those who participated in 1933 made application for a renewal of their contracts.[66] In 1936, however, when the United States Supreme Court declared the First Agricultural Adjustment Act unconstitutional, the farmers of Rush County called for continued federal assistance. A resolution demanding a new farm policy to replace the defunct AAA was drafted in

[61]Rushville *Republican*, March 9, June 15, 1934.
[62]*Ibid.*, June 7, 1934.
[63]Milroy *Press*, April 5, 1934.
[64]Rushville *Democrat*, December 21, 1933; Houk, *A Century of Indiana Farm Prices*, p. 51.
[65]Rushville *Republican*, November 28, 1930, August 2, September 13, December 20, 1933, May 6, 27, 1935; Houk, *A Century of Indiana Farm Prices*, p. 62.
[66]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1935.

Rushville at a meeting of sixty former AAA committeemen from eleven counties. The resolution, which was directed to Congress through the state's two United States senators, read:[67]

> We, representative farmers from the following counties [names included] in assembly at Rushville on Thursday, January 30, do declare that inasmuch as the agricultural program in effect during the past two years has been declared null and void, and whereas an agricultural emergency still exists, do hereby go on record as being unanimously in accord with farm leaders who have drafted a new program of soil conservation and do hereby demand that Congress support in its entirety such legislation as may be presented to them by the afore said group of farm leaders.

What prompted the most concern of county farmers was the termination of the corn-hog allotment program that had begun in 1934. Under the corn-hog allotment 1,362 county farmers received almost $600,000 in payment for about 160,000 hogs and almost $177,000 for about 15,000 acres of corn land held out of production—in all some $775,000 in payments from the national government. Not only did the allotment policy restrict corn-hog production and help stimulate price increases in these commodities—corn that sold for 58 cents a bushel in 1934 jumped to 73 cents a bushel in 1935, and hogs that sold for $4.67 a hundredweight in 1934 jumped to $9.30 a hundredweight in 1935—but the program also aided farmers in conserving and promoting the fertility of their soil. Corn acreage reduction encouraged farmers to grow alfalfa and to place a larger percentage of their tillable land in legumes, which county farmers had long recognized as the best means of ensuring permanent soil fertility. The government policy allowed many farmers to do what their good judgment told them they should do to ensure the fertility of their farms.[68] Despite its obvious advantages, some objected to the program on the grounds that southern states benefitted more than northern states. Others complained of the unnecessary killing of hogs. Under the program government inspectors made frequent checks on farms, counting the number of pigs and ordering the elimination of the oversupply in a way that would not allow the excess pork to compete in the regular market. Unfortunately, disposal often meant killing the pigs and burying them or sending them to a reduction plant. Such waste, so contrary to their nature, made many county farmers dissatisfied with the program.[69]

Although some, perhaps even many, found fault with the corn-hog program, county farmers voted 1,096 to 79 in 1935 to continue the program largely because it brought in important revenue.[70] The average farm, which contained 138 acres with 49.5 acres in corn, contracted 11.5 acres in the program for which the participant received $136.73. The same farm was allowed to produce eighty hogs for which the farmer received $5 each, giving a total payment of $400. Thus, the payment in both corn and hogs for a 138 acre farm totalled $536.73. Expenses for administering the program on this hypothetical farm amounted to $16.64 leaving a balance of $520.09 received as a result of the corn-hog allotment. Since the average net income of a farmer in 1929 was $1,090, or only slightly more than twice as much as a farmer received in subsidy payment, this amounted to a significant assistance to many county farmers.[71] When one considers that keeping production down allowed for improvement of the stock and building up the fertility of the soil, it is not surprising that Rush County farmers responded so vehemently when the Supreme Court declared the First AAA unconstitutional.

The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936, a stopgap measure to fill the void created by the Supreme Court decision, found wide appeal in the county. Some 1,700 county farmers made application for grants under the program. Such

[67] Rushville *Republican*, January 31, 1936.

[68] Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1934; Rushville *Republican*, April 26, 1934, March 23, 1935; Houk, *A Century of Indiana Farm Prices*, pp. 51, 56.

[69] Rushville *Republican*, August 31, September 4, 1934.

[70] *Ibid.*, October 28, 1935.

[71] *Ibid.*, August 24, 1929, March 23, 1935.

approval stemmed from the harmony of the program with the natural desires of the county's farmers to husband the fertility of the soil through the planting of legumes. Under the First AAA the emphasis had been on crop reduction. The 1936 program emphasized the planting of soil conservation crops, which many had already been doing under the First AAA. Clover failure in 1936 together with higher prices for corn and hogs caused by a drought limited participation, but in 1938 when the soil conservation policy of the Second AAA was passed, some 1,150 joined the program. Although the worst years of the Depression had passed, the number of participants continued to increase through the last years of the decade. By 1940, 1,430 farmers enrolled in the program and received cash benefits averaging $290 per farm.[72]

Rush County farmers did not escape the Depression unscathed, but neither did they suffer the severe hardships encountered by other agricultural areas of the country. Although the total number of county farms declined by somewhat more than a hundred during the 1930s, from 1,875 to 1,769, other farmers took up the abandoned land so that the average size of a farm increased from 132.7 to 142.1 acres. And while the value of farm land and buildings declined more than $1.5 million, from $24,963,588 to $23,348,623, most of this reduction resulted from depressed land values. Land that sold for $56.25 an acre in 1935 was selling for $90 an acre by 1940; with the worst years of the Depression over, as the agricultural economy improved so too did land values. Further, even though there were fewer farms and lower values in farm land and buildings, the value of the farm implements and machinery grew by more than a quarter of a million dollars, increasing from $1,524,078 in 1930 to $1,774,414 in 1940. Moreover, while 767 of the county's farms in 1930 had tractors, 1,124 farms (of 1,769) reported a total of 1,190 tractors in 1940 with just over half of them new since 1936.[73] Despite the rigors of the Depression county farmers retained their commitment to technology and mechanization and the increased agricultural efficiency that resulted.

The biggest change in farming during the Depression resulted from electrification. In 1930 fewer than 260 farms purchased electricity. By 1940, 1,207 farms purchased electricity, while only 26 provided their own. Another 408 farms situated within a quarter mile of an electric distribution line needed only minor expansion to become purchasers. The Rural Electrification Act of 1935 brought about this dramatic change. In April of that year thirteen Rush County farmers, through the Farm Bureau Cooperative Association and the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, applied to the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) for a loan and incorporation papers. The REA required three patrons per mile on each electric line constructed and would loan money at 3 percent interest to a locally formed corporation for the purpose of erecting poles and stringing wire. The Rush County Rural Electric Membership Corporation (REMC) was organized in January, 1936, and by July it had 1,060 members, most of whom (957) were Rush County farmers. Petitions for distribution lines flowed in, and projects involving 346 miles of lines, mostly in Rush County (312 miles), were soon underway.[74]

The REA loan was similar to a federal farm loan with principal and interest to be paid annually over a twenty year period. Each member was required to wire his own house and other buildings at a cost of about $75. The REMC would erect up to 450 feet of private wire from the distribution line to the farm house. Each member then had to run three poles at a cost of $49 from the distribution line to his house. Wire cost the farmer $2 per rod, and a membership fee of $5 was charged to

[72]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1938, 1939, 1940.

[73]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Agriculture*, I, Pt. 1, pp. 554, 618; *Fifteenth Census* (1930), *Agriculture*, II, Pt. 1, pp. 560-61.

[74]*Laws of Indiana*, 1935, Chapter 175; Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1936; Rushville *Republican*, October 22, 1940, July 9, 1936.

participate in the program. In all it cost each farmer about $150 to electrify his farm.[75]

In October, 1936, the Public Service Commission of Indiana approved the plan and made available $170,000 to begin construction. Farmers were so anxious to get electric power that many donated their time and services to move telephone poles to make way for the REMC lines and to cut down trees to clear a right of way. Ceremonies dedicating the erection of the first pole in the Rush County REMC project were held February 28, 1938, on the farm of Mrs. John Humes, two miles east of Rushville on State Road 44. As the pole was placed in the hole Mrs. Marjorie Ging officially dedicated it by crashing a coal oil lamp against the pole, signifying a new era in home lighting for rural Rush County. Three months later, on June 1, the first section of line was energized by the Southeastern Indiana Power Company.[76] In the months that followed the cooperative spent another $323,000 on construction, and on October 30, 1939, its 481 miles of line were completed. The Rush County REMC provided electrical energy for all of Rush County and parts of Fayette, Franklin, Decatur, Henry, and Hancock counties. At a cost of approximately 7 cents per kilowatt hour modern electrical energy had come to the farm. REMC power provided electrical current for over 1,000 irons, some 300 refrigerators, 60 electric ranges, as many as 700 washing machines, and approximately 800 radios. The promise of the "Great White City" at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893 had finally come to rural Rush County.[77]

The decades of the 1920s and 1930s had been hard for Rush County agriculture, but not disastrous. As war erupted in Europe, county farmers faced the uncertain future strengthened by adversity and prepared to adapt to the opportunities modern agriculture might provide.

Setting the first REMC pole, February 28, 1938.

[75] Rushville *Republican*, July 9, 1936.
[76] *Ibid.*, February 28, June 1, 1938.
[77] *Ibid.*, October 22, 1940.

Chapter 6

If It's Good, You Can Be Second

The Depression drained the vitality from county agriculture, but it did not destroy its potential. Adequate labor, husbandry skills, and above all the natural fertility of its soil remained. As the storm clouds gathered over Europe, the county's farmers stood ready to produce their share of the wartime demands.

In 1940, though tractors were in general use, Rush County agriculture still depended heavily on animal and human power. The county's 1,769 farms reported having 1,190 tractors, with almost half purchased before 1936. The average tractor had seven years of service by the time the United States entered the war. Besides being old, the tractors were small, averaging between 20 and 30 horsepower and capable of pulling no more than a one- or two-bottom plow. Though the 4,520 horses on county farms were down from the 6,796 in 1930 (not to mention the 10,106 in 1920), virtually every farm depended to some extent on *real* horse power. For many farmers, horses were the only source of power for pulling plows, discs, planters, cultivators, and wagons. The total value of farm implements and machinery in the county amounted to $1.77 million, much of it horse-drawn equipment modified for use with a tractor if the farmer had one. Some farms had modern machinery like the one- and two-row, pull-type corn picker, the stationary corn sheller, and the pull-type combine, to lessen physical labor; but, with an average of about a $1,000 worth of farm implements and machinery per farm, such improved machinery was the exception rather than the rule.[1]

Jim Irvin, Arlington, invented the first corn picker, but he neglected to patent it.

[1]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Agriculture*, I, Pt. 1, pp. 618, 578, 554; *Fourteenth Census* (1920), VI, *Agriculture*, Pt. 1, pp. 348-49; typescript of taped interview with Kenneth Brashaber, July 24, 1980, p. 10, in Rushville Public Library.

Farmers had more mechanical help in 1940 than in 1920, but farming remained labor intensive. The rural farm population in the county numbered 8,300 with somewhat over half male (4,252). Among the males more than half (2,873) were above 21 years of age. Farm operators averaged 49.8 years of age, and most practiced farming as a full-time career. In 1939 only 410 farm operators reported working away from their farms (with an average of 108 days per operator), while 1,344 reported no work off the farm. Averaging almost five persons each, most farms had adequate family labor. Only 544 farms reported having hired labor, with an average of 1.4 laborers per farm.[2] Even after the first draft levies and attractive industrial jobs had begun to draw young men away from the farms, the labor supply remained adequate. The *Republican* in June, 1941, reported that the wheat harvest had begun with "no particular demand" for labor.[3]

The land resources of the county were almost totally utilized, with 96 percent of the county's 261,760 acres in farms in 1940. The average size farm was 142 acres, up 25 acres from the 1935 figure. The increase resulted largely from the disappearance of many farms consisting of 10 acres or less. The number of these small farms declined from 239 in 1935 to 53 in 1940. National farm programs resulted in over 14,000 fewer acres being planted in 1940 than in 1929, but corn, hogs, wheat, and soybeans remained the county's staple crops. Corn was the farmer's principal crop, with winter wheat and soybeans his major cash crops. The 42,884 acres of winter wheat and 7,059 acres of soybeans planted by county farmers in 1939 yielded 16.7 and 14.3 bushels per acre respectively. The 73,147 acres of corn yielded 40.6 bushels per acre and went almost exclusively as feed for hogs. The 152,860 hogs sold in 1940 were the county farmers' principal source of income.[4]

World War II and the nation's first peacetime draft began a process that was to alter the land-labor-capital relationship that formed the basis of the county's agricultural productivity. The opportunity for jobs in wartime industry and the military draft caused some men to leave farming and sell their farms; more importantly, it caused an endemic labor shortage that continued after the war. By January, 1941, 1,952 young men from the county had registered for the draft and by 1945 over 2,000 had served in the armed forces.[5] Farm laborers, who earned about $7.50 a week as agricultural workers, found industrial employment particularly appealing. By January, 1943, the *Republican* reported that "the farm hand who used to go to town on Saturday night now has gone to stay."[6] One farmer remembers farm laborers going to Indianapolis to work in wartime industries at the "terrific" wage of 65 cents an hour.[7] To meet or exceed prewar production levels farmers had to develop alternatives for the sons and farm laborers no longer available.

At first farmers followed the simple expedient of calling on their own reserves of time and energy. They pooled their labor and machinery with their neighbors, and long hours in the field became longer. As draft calls became larger and more frequent and industrial jobs more attractive, farmers reached their limit. Farm wives, always participants in the productivity of the farm, were the first to come to the farmers' assistance by assuming a greater share of the physical labor of the farm. As drivers of tractors and wagons, they became indispensable partners, but even their help was not enough. By 1943, three out of four farmers were in need of additional help. As the labor shortage

[2]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Agriculture*, I, Pt. 1, pp. 618, 610, *Population*, II, Pt. 2, p. 751.

[3]Rushville *Republican*, June 20, 1941.

[4]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census* (1940), *Agriculture*, I, Pt. 1, pp. 554, 570, 590, 622, 630.

[5]Rushville *Republican*, January 3, 1941.

[6]*Ibid.*, January 26, 1943.

[7]Typescript of taped interview with Wayne H. Carmony, June 28, 1980, in Rushville Public Library.

progressed from "acute" to "very acute," farmers depended more and more on volunteer help. Many townswomen who had never before thought of working donned bib overalls and volunteered. Business and professional men, members of the Rushville Junior Chamber of Commerce, Boys' Club, 4-H Club, and students in school all cooperated in volunteering to work on farms at critical planting and cultivating times and especially during the harvesting of essential crops.[8]

Farmers also got help from an unexpected source—the United States' wartime enemy, Germany. From the prisoner of war camp at Morristown, Shelby County, the government in 1944 made available to agricultural operators German prisoners who had recently arrived from France. Use of POWs as farm laborers was subject to a number of restrictions. Farmers were not to fraternize with the prisoners or allow others to do so, and prisoners were not allowed to wear clothing other than war department issue. Employers had to occupy fully the time of the prisoners and to cooperate in censoring their mail and access to news. Those who used POWs had to provide transportation to and from the camp, for which they were paid one cent per mile per man. They also had to furnish a guard. Employers paid the prevailing rate for common labor, but only eight cents a day was paid to the prisoner himself, the balance going to defray necessary camp expenses. In addition, employers benefitted from the prisoners' labor without the need to pay for workmen's compensation insurance. Under this program, at least sixty prisoners worked for farmers and canning factories in the county.[9]

The use of German war prisoners helped lessen the labor shortage, but relief came from other sources as well. In 1944, fifty Jamaicans worked in the county from August through October. The total number of migrant workers increased to seventy the following year and although no war prisoners were used after 1945, migrant labor continued to be used through 1946. Farmers used migrant labor mainly for harvesting tomatoes, but the workers did other jobs on the farms as well, such as harvesting and cultivating crops, cutting weeds, and building fences. The Selective Service Board also helped reduce the labor shortage by granting 2-C classification to farm workers. By 1945 the county agricultural agent could report that "Many Rush County farm boys were deferred for farm work to increase food production. The county War Board and Draft Board cooperated together in keeping the farm labor supply problem to a minimum."[10] Through the employment of war prisoners, use of migrant labor, and reclassification of farm youths, farmers did not face the labor shortages at the end of the war that they had confronted in its early years.

Though labor shortage was the single most pressing problem of farmers during the war, other problems such as scarcity of feed, gasoline, and tires, machinery rationing, and difficulty in repairing machinery all added to the problems of farming. The war years sorely tested the old farm maxim "use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." Conservation, a natural inclination of farmers, became their watchword. Under the quotas set by the government far fewer farm machines and implements were available than were wanted or needed. In 1943 government quotas allowed only 8 new corn planters, 4 grain drills, 1 lime spreader, 17 disc harrows, 23 cultivators, 18 tractors, 6 farm wagons, 7 farm elevators, 4 horse mowers, 8 tractor mowers, 6 hay loaders, 12 combines (six foot or less), and

[8]Annual Report of the Rush County Assistant Agricultural Agent, 1942, p. 6, in Rush County Cooperative Extension Service Records, Rush County Courthouse; Rushville *Republican*, October 20, 1942, January 15, February 10, July 23, 1943, June 19, 1944; Annual Report of the Rush County Assistant Agricultural Agent, 1944, p. 6.

[9]Rushville *Republican*, August 31, September 23, 28, 1944; Annual Report of the Rush County Assistant Agricultural Agent, 1945, p. 9.

[10]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1944, p. 7, 1945, p. 9; Annual Report of the Rush County Assistant Agricultural Agent, 1945; Rushville *Republican*, May 17, 1946.

13 corn pickers to be purchased for the county's 1,828 farms.[11] Nonetheless, the 1945 Census of Agriculture reported an increase of 253 tractors in the county from the 1,190 reported there in 1940.[12]

Restrictions put a premium on used equipment and made urgent the need to maintain old machinery. This was especially true of tractors and harvesting equipment such as combines and corn pickers because they were such labor saving aids to the farmer. As early as 1941 an estimated 15 percent of the approximately 46,000 acres of winter wheat planted was harvested in one operation made possible by the use of pull-type combines. In 1945 three farmers using corn pickers worked together to harvest nearly 18,000 bushels of corn on their three farms in twelve days. One expedient used by farmers to keep their machinery operating was to pool spare parts. Before selling machinery for scrap, they stripped the metal parts and placed them in a pool or "bank" where neighbors swapped or bought spare items. By such means farmers kept old equipment running.

Price ceilings on farm tractors, combines, corn pickers, corn binders, and motor- or tractor-driven hay balers made it difficult for those who needed them the most to purchase used equipment. Despite the demand, if less than one year old such implements could not be sold for more than 85 percent of the base purchase price; and if more than one year old, they could not be sold for more than 70 percent of the base price. Violators paid stiff penalties, but some made efforts to defeat the price ceiling regulations. One practice at farm sales was to include a tractor or other regulated implement with a group of non-regulated implements such as a wagon or manure spreader. In this way, the group would bring a much higher price than if each piece were sold separately. Regular attendance of price inspectors at farm sales put a stop to this practice and to most other attempts to evade the law. Adherence to the law meant that if more than one person bid the ceiling price for a regulated piece of machinery, the names of the bidders were put in a hat with one name drawn to determine the successful purchaser.[13]

In spite of the problems that plagued farmers, an increase in the number of farms in the county actually occurred during the war years. Many of the additional farms were small, which reduced the average farm size to 138.6 acres, but apparently even marginal farm operations could prosper under the wartime demands. The postwar years proved less favorable. By 1950 the increase in number of farms during the war proved as much an aberration as had the increases of the mid-1930s. The long-term trend toward farm consolidation, begun in the 1920s, became evident. As Table 3 indicates, 1950 appears to have been a watershed year in the transformation of county agriculture. From then on the number of farms declined steadily, with no renaissance as in the 1930s and 1940s, while the average farm size continually increased.

The war years accelerated and made permanent a number of changes that had been going on since the 1920s. County farmers had begun leaving the land in significant numbers in the 1920s, and their return during the Depression and World War II had been less a return to the heritage of their parents than a reaction to economic circumstance. Hence, many of the servicemen who returned after the war did not resume farming. As the county agent reported, "The labor situation on Rush County farms in 1948 was even more critical than during the war."[14] The outbreak of the Korean War and reactivation of the draft in 1950 further hastened the farmers' exodus. The county agricultural agent in that year reported, "In view of the tight

[11]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1943, p. 2; Annual Report of the Rush County Assistant Agricultural Agent, 1944, p. 6; Rushville *Republican*, December 26, 1942.

[12]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1945), I, Pt. 4, pp. 48-49.

[13]Rushville *Republican*, June 28, 1941; Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1946, p. 15; Rushville *Republican*, April 30, 1942, January 25, February 3, 18, 1943.

[14]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1948, p. 13.

Table 3. Number and Average Size of Rush County Farms

Year	1935	1940	1944	1950	1954	1959	1964	1969	1974	1978
Number of Farms	2,139	1,769	1,828	1,694	1,582	1,336	1,144	1,131	1,038	948
Average Size (acres)	117	142	139	149	157	187	213	220	237	247

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Table 4. Value of Farm Implements and Machinery

Year	1940	1969	1974	1978
Farms Reporting	1,706	1,087	1,003	948
Dollar Value (millions)	1.77	13.71	30.79	51.30
Avg. Value Per Farm (dollars)	1,040	12,608	30,696	54,109

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Table 5. Number of Trucks, Tractors, and Horses on Rush County Farms

Year	1940	1944	1950	1954	1959	1964	1969	1974	1978
Trucks	390	499	683	1,070	1,085	1,193	1,204	1,376	1,405
Tractors	1,190	1,443	1,695	2,400	2,245	2,305	2,297	2,320	2,309
Horses[a]	4,520	3,300	1,262	430	289	—	443	560	571

[a] Includes all horses, not just draft animals
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Clarence L. Spuller, Rush County agricultural agent, 1943-1966.

labor situation, the farmers have continued to purchase better labor saving tools and tools that have larger capacities such as four-row corn planters, two-row corn pickers, pick-up and automatic-tie hay balers, self-propelled combines, and more grain and corn elevators."[15]

The labor shortage of the war years encouraged farmers to turn to mechanization as a substitute. In the 1920s the purchase of farm machinery produced a labor surplus, while in the 1940s a labor shortage necessitated the purchase of farm machinery. Table 4 indicates the dollar value of farm implements and machinery on Rush County farms from 1940 to 1978. As the table shows, the value of farm implements and machinery increased significantly in the three and a half decades following 1940. Their dollar value grew from $1.77 million in 1940 to $13.71 million in 1969 and reached $51.3 million in 1978. County farmers had an average of little more than $1,000 invested in farm machinery in 1940, but by 1978 that figure had increased to over $54,000.

One of the biggest and most important investments farmers made in farm machinery was the purchase of a tractor. The tractor, more than any other single piece of farm equipment, revolutionized farming because it gave the farmer an almost unlimited source of power for field work and other farm operations. The hardest and most arduous task that the tractor made easier was the preparation of a fine textured seedbed for the corn crop. The farmer did this by first plowing the land with a one- or two-bottom plow. Then he disked and dragged the field at least two or three times, first going with the direction of plowing, then crossways, and then diagonally across the field. Finally, he disked the field once more just ahead of the planter. Once he prepared the seedbed, the farmer pulled a two- or four-row corn planter across the field, planting his corn with rows averaging forty-two inches apart and eighteen inches between each corn plant in the row. During the growing season, a farmer cultivated his corn three or four times until it reached the knee-high stage. With the tractor, a farmer shortened the time necessary to perform these operations from weeks to days or even hours.[16]

As Table 5 indicates, although there were 1,190 tractors in the county in 1940 almost every farm depended on horses to perform some work. At that time over 1,400 farms relied on an average of 3 horses per farm for work. A decade later only 570 farms used horses with an average of 2.2 horses per farm. Horses had been a good source of power, but tractors were better. Horses required more care and attention, they used valuable pasture land that could be cropped, and they could not work unlimited hours in the field. Farmers might push themselves to fill the vacuum created by the labor shortage, but horses die if not properly cared for. The tractor replaced the sound and smell of the horse with the roar of engines and the smell of gasoline and kerosene. By 1950 there were 1,695 tractors in use on county farms, and 2,400 by 1954—or over 100 percent more tractors in 1954 than 1940. Thereafter they became fewer in number; they also became larger in size. In 1940 tractors had averaged about 20 horsepower; by 1950, 40 and even 50 horsepower tractors were common. From then on tractor power steadily advanced, increasing from 45 to 70 horsepower in the 1950s, to over 80 in the 1960s, and to over 180 in the 1970s.[17]

By enabling the farmer to plow deeper and better prepare his seedbed the tractor helped increase productivity, but so too did use of improved varieties of seed. In the 1930s, most farmers

[15]*Ibid.*, 1950, p. 5.

[16]Clarence L. Spuller, "Agricultural Changes Made in Rush County During a Quarter of a Century, 1940-1965," p. 6 (unpublished manuscript prepared by Rush County's agricultural agent from 1943 to 1966, copy in Rushville Public Library). A few farmers began trying minimum tillage corn production in 1960. Minimum tillage meant that the ground was plowed and disked once and then planted. Farmers had previously worked the ground "too well" for a good corn crop. Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1960, p. 10, 1962, p. 89.

[17]Brashaber interview, pp. 10-12; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1950), I, *Counties and State Economic Areas*, Pt. 4, p. 124.

still grew open pollinated yellow corn that they planted in forty-two inch rows and fertilized with manure. They planted 10,000 seeds to the acre and produced an average yield of between thirty-five and forty-five bushels per acre.[18] Around 1937 some farmers began putting out test plots of hybrid seed corn that produced yields of 112 to 114 bushels per acre. The ideal hybrid ear was ten inches long (a half inch shorter than open pollinated yellow corn) and carried its diameter to the end with only slight tapering. At the tip it rounded off quickly. The rows were straight and the kernels well developed and uniform. The last two kernels at the butt end were slightly "pulled in." The ear was cylindrical or nearly so, and its circumference, a third of the distance from the butt, was three quarters of its length. The ear had no less than 16 rows of kernels nor more than 20.[19]

Farmers began planting hybrid seed corn as early as 1937, and gradually in successive years the practice became common. By the mid-1940s most farmers were using hybrid seed for their corn crop. The introduction of hybrid seed corn significantly increased crop yield per acre (see Appendix, Table A-1). Annual average yields for most farmers in the 1940s of 60 bushels per acre were common and some did much better; a few farmers using hybrid seed corn reported yields as high as 147.8 bushels per acre.[20] Since corn was the single most important crop grown in the county, efficient planting, cultivation, and harvesting of this crop dominated agricultural activity.

Even after the introduction of hybrid seed corn, the average yield remained around 60 bushels until the 1960s when it increased sharply, reaching almost one hundred bushels per acre in 1969. This increase, in part, resulted from farmers planting more seed in narrowed rows. By the 1960s farmers were planting as many as 28,000 seeds per acre in 30 inch rows. Through damage from winds, rain, or insects they anticipated a 10 to 15 percent crop loss, but still expected to harvest between 22,000 and 23,000 plants.[21] Some farmers did much better than the average yields. The farm of D. E. Carmony had yields as high as 85 bushels per acre in the 1940s, 95 bushels in the 1950s, and 100 bushels in the 1960s; during the 1970s his son Wayne Carmony had five-year averages as high as 151 bushels per acre.[22]

Prewar farmers depended largely on a three-year crop rotation—corn, small grain, and pasture grass—to maintain the fertility of their soil. They supplemented their natural fertilizer with only a moderate amount of commercial chemical fertilizer.[23] In 1939 farmers broadcast and plowed down some 5,435 tons of dry chemical fertilizer. They did not side dress corn or top dress wheat with nitrogen, and they applied only a small amount of fertilizer directly on corn or wheat. Farmers gradually increased their use of fertilizers in the 1940s with the common application being from 50 to 65 pounds per acre of 2-12-6 fertilizer on corn, and 100 pounds of 2-12-6 on wheat. In the late 1940s some farmers began side dressing corn with dry nitrogen anytime from the knee-high stage to the last cultivation. The dry nitrogen had to be used in moist soil or be followed by rain in order to benefit the corn. Top dressing wheat followed from the success farmers had in side dressing corn. Farmers side dressed in the spring when wheat shoots were 2 or 3 inches above the ground. They had learned that the wise use of fertilizer meant more crops per acre, per man, and per machine. The use of commercial fertilizers increased crops with no extra acres to plow, no extra seedbed to work up, and no extra acres to cultivate or harvest. The fact that about 10 pounds of nitrogen, 5 pounds of phosphate, and 10 pounds of potash equaled the

[18]Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 6.

[19]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1940, p. 13; Rushville *Republican*, April 18, 1950.

[20]Rushville *Republican*, December 9, 1942.

[21]Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 10; Brashaber interview, p. 2.

[22]D. E. Carmony, Inc., Farm Records, in possession of Wayne H. Carmony.

[23]Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 4.

nutritional value of a ton of manure was not lost on hard working farmers.[24]

The use of commercial chemical fertilizers increased considerably in the postwar years (see Appendix, Table A-2). In 1952 the county agricultural agent reported "heavier applications than usual" of fertilizers by farmers. He also reported more use of soil analysis to determine the correct amounts that farmers should apply. "Good crop yields," he reported in 1956, "have been due to farmers using larger amounts of fertilizer." In the early 1950s farmers also began the regular use of liquid nitrogen or anhydrous ammonia as a top dressing for wheat and side dressing for corn. One test area in 1954 used 80 pounds of nitrogen and 400 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer disked in just before corn planting.[25] By 1954 county farmers had become fully committed to the use of heavy doses of chemical fertilizers and lime. The use of the former had more than tripled since 1940 to over 16,700 tons, while use of the latter had increased more than eight times to over 26,500 tons. Sound farming practice by then called for 150 to 300 pounds of 0-20-20 fertilizer per acre for wheat and oats as a top dressing and 300 pounds of 4-16-10 per acre broadcast or plowed down before planting corn.[26] Because many farmers went to continuous corn in the late 1960s and planted fewer legumes, their use of lime declined—but for that reason their use of chemical fertilizers increased. By 1974 county farmers were using over 25,000 tons of chemical fertilizers while their use of lime declined to just over 11,000 tons.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 6; *Combined Annual Report of County Extension Workers* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1944), copy in Rush County Cooperative Extension Service Records, Rush County Courthouse; Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1945, p. 9; Rushville *Republican*, October 12, 1945, July 1, 1957; Annual Report of Rush County Cooperative Extension Work, 1962, p. 962, copy in Rush County Cooperative Extension Service Records, Rush County Courthouse; Rushville *Republican*, February 24, 1958.

[25] Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1952, p. 10, 1954, p. 7, 1956, pp. 8-9.

[26] Rushville *Republican*, August 5, 1960.

In 1940 farmers still protected their crops from insects with the traditional methods used by their fathers and grandfathers. To deal with an infestation of chinch bugs, for example, they created a physical barrier consisting of a dusty furrow or strip around the field to be protected. They made the barrier by plowing a dead furrow, throwing the dirt both ways, and then dragging a log or trough of planks back and forth in the furrow until the sides and bottom had been worked down to a fine dust, which buried and killed the bugs as they tried to crawl through it. The method had a limited effectiveness because a heavy shower would ruin the barrier and one or two acres of corn could be destroyed before a fresh dust barrier could be worked up. Moreover, while the dust barrier did not require costly equipment or the expenditure of money for materials, it did require a steady supply of labor to maintain its effectiveness. Another method of dealing with the chinch bug that was less labor intensive but more expensive was to pour creosote, coal tar, or oil tar on a path made smooth and firm along the margin of the field to be protected. The odor of the tar repelled the bugs, and its stickiness acted as a physical barrier.[27]

Such traditional methods of insect control began to decline in the late 1940s as pesticides and insecticides like DDT became more widely used. DDT was particularly effective against the cut worms and corn borers that devastated corn crops. It also had wide use in helping control insects around barns, farrowing houses, and other buildings and places were farmers kept livestock. Since Rush County was noted for its corn and hogs, it is surprising that DDT did not achieve immediate popularity when it was introduced in 1946. Only after the Sherwin-Williams Company distributed free of charge some $1,500 worth of Pestroy DDT in 1949 did it become popular.[28] Other insecticides that followed, like Toxophene, were also used, but they did not achieve widespread use (see Appendix, Table A-3). Either

[27] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1944.

[28] *Ibid.*, May 22, 1946, June 26, 1947, August 30, 1949.

because careful farming practices reduced insect danger to crops or because the county experienced few infestations, farmers sprayed only about 10 percent of their cropland down to the 1970s. Even then, though insecticide use increased, they sprayed only about 25 percent of their cropland.

Weed control, as Table A-3 suggests, proved much more of a problem than insect control, particularly as farmers stopped planting wheat. A three-year rotation that included a wheat crop helped control weeds since winter wheat outgrew weeds and smothered them. Farmers rather quickly adopted the use of weed killers after 2,4-D was introduced around 1946.[29] Using row crop-type or ordinary boom-type sprayers, farmers began using herbicides by spraying three fourths to a pound of 2,4-D per acre at the base of the cornstalks and directly on weeds. As farmers began growing more corn in four-, five-, and six-year rotations, and finally continuous corn, the use of herbicides increased. But their use created new problems for the farmer. When the preemergence herbicides Atrazine and Simazine came into use in the late 1950s, for example, they proved very effective in controlling weeds in corn, but their residue carried over to the next year. Since the residue could injure soybeans and wheat, their use restricted crops a farmer could plant the following year. Once used, these herbicides almost dictated continuous corn planting or at least two years of corn. Like many other aspects of the technological aids that farmers increasingly turned to, the use of Atrazine increased productivity, but at a cost. As one farmer put it, "The higher the yield the more precarious things become."[30]

The increased use of tractors, hybrid seed, commercial fertilizers, and pesticides and herbicides that helped increase productivity focused attention on harvesting. In the late 1920s and 1930s a few farmers had one- and two-row pull-type corn pickers, but in 1940 most of the corn was still harvested as it always had been—shucked by hand from standing stalks, then hauled by horse-drawn wagon from the field to the corncrib. Shucking 100 bushels of corn and shoveling it into the crib was considered a full day's work, and meant getting out in the field at daybreak and working until sundown.[31] By 1950 some 698 farms had 708 corn pickers, most of which were the one- and two-row pull type (see Appendix, Table A-4). At least one farmer had a self-propelled corn picker in the county in 1946, but most kept their pull-type pickers, waiting to see if the new machine proved itself.[32] Many farmers agreed with Marion Liggett that, "If something comes along that is good, you don't have to be first, because if it's good you can be second."[33]

In 1951 the first Indiana Mechanical Corn Picking Contest was held on a farm southeast of Rushville. The contest included a special demonstration of the combined use of a picker-sheller, self-unloading wagon, batch drying, and grain elevators. The demonstration showed how corn could be picked, shelled, hauled, dried, and stored at the rate of more than 100 bushels an hour.[34] Thousands came from all parts of Indiana, but in particular from Rush and adjacent counties, to see the demonstration. Over the next few years these contests generated so much interest that by 1954 there were 980 corn pickers and corn picker-shellers in the county. Many farmers who did not have their own corn pickers hired a custom operator to do their harvesting. The new, more efficient method of harvesting ended the traditional fall scene of shocks of drying corn in the fields. Only a few years earlier, fields of drying corn shocks were typical of harvest time on the farm; now, as one observer noted, the fields were "a scene of devastation—nothing but broken and flattened stalks crushed to earth." The pickers did in a day or

[29] *Ibid.*, June 11, 1946; Carmony interview, p. 5.

[30] Rushville *Republican*, May 12, 1958; Carmony interview, pp. 2, 4-5, 50.

[31] Milroy *Press*, October 23, 1925; Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 6.

[32] Rushville *Republican*, November 11, 1946.

[33] Typescript of taped interview with Marion Liggett, August 30, 1979, p. 19, in Rushville Public Library.

[34] Rushville *Republican*, October 12, 15, 1951.

The First and the Best

By Emily Waggoner, grade 9

On October 13, 1951, the first State Mechanical Corn Picking Contest was held in Rush County, two miles east of Rushville. The idea of the contest came from the program director of WIBC radio, Dix Harper. The purpose of the contest was to emphasize the need for safer and more efficient corn harvesting. He contacted the president of the Rushville Junior Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Davis Ellis, to carry out his idea.

The Jaycees organized eleven committees and eleven chairmen of the committees to begin planning the event. The committees were publicity, finance, sanitation, exhibitors, labor pool, power and lights, field preparation, traffic control, reception, beauty contest, and the program.

The chairman of the Program Committee, Otto Busard, organized the radio entertainment, the queen presentation, special entertainment, and the cornpicking contest itself. Although the contest was on one day, the preparation started two and one-half months before. Each of the committees was a great help to the completion of the contest.

The contest's publicity went throughout Indiana and neighboring states. It brought over 30,000 people to Rush County the day of the contest.

The chairman of the reception committee, Vance Waggoner, sent out invitations to the governor and lieutenant governor of Indiana and many other important people at that time to the Harvest Dinner held the day before the contest.

There were thirty-three contestants. Each brought his own equipment and came from all over Indiana. The winner of the contest was Marvin Johnson from Carthage. He picked the clearest row of corn.

The contest had outstanding results. It brought the largest crowd in Rush County history, over 30,000 people. It had coverage by six newspapers and national publicity through United Press and Associated Press. It had radio coverage, and after the event a color motion picture was made about it.

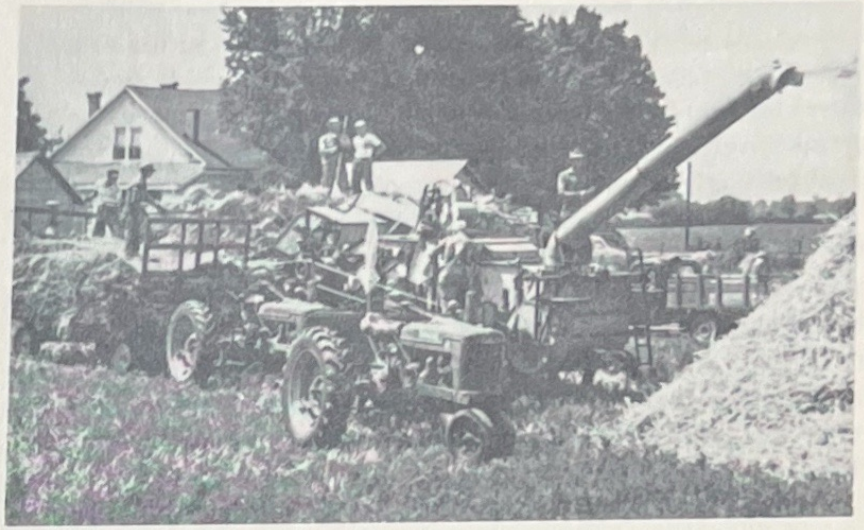
Henry Schricker, the governor of Indiana at that time, wrote to the president of the Rushville Jaycees: "My congratulations to you and to the members of your splendid organization upon your sponsorship of the first State Mechanical Corn Picking Contest and the remarkable success which attended this undertaking. It was one of the smoothest and most spectacular events in the history of Indiana and could only be accomplished under the leadership of such a fine organization."

All in all the first State Mechanical Corn Picking Contest was a spectacular success, not only for the corn harvesters but for the Rushville Jaycees. It was such a success that the Rushville Junior Chamber of Commerce was elected to sponsor the next State Corn Picking Contest at Rush County in 1952.

two what it had taken a whole family weeks of hard work to accomplish.[35]

The new method of harvesting required artificial drying equipment because harvesting was done while the moisture content of the corn was too high for safe storage. With a moisture content of between 20 and 25 percent, corn shelled directly from the field had to have nine pounds of water removed per bushel. If not dried shelled corn harvested with this much moisture spoils very rapidly in storage, especially in warm weather. Harvesting several thousand bushels of corn a season, farmers needed special drying equipment and mechanical loading and unloading equipment that increased the cost of operation. In 1964 county farms spent $31,388 on LP gas, butane and propane; by 1974 the money spent on drying fuel had risen to $204,000.[36] Though mechanical drying methods increased costs, they enabled farmers to harvest earlier. This allowed them to clear fields for early seeding of small grain or cover crops, thus reducing the chances of loss from insects and cutting down the possibility of damage from fall storms. Artificial drying also gave the farmer control over storage problems and helped eliminate soft corn worries.[37]

In the 1940s most farmers harvested their small grain crops, particularly wheat and oats, with an eight foot binder that cut the stalks of grain and bound them into sheaves with twine. The sheaves were then gathered by hand and shocked upright in the field for drying. Farmers then separated the seed from the stalk with threshers. They threshed grain crops with a grain separator driven by long, flat drive belts from a tractor. Threshing rings in



A modern threshing operation, from opposite sides.

[35]Editorial, "Cornfield Revolution," *ibid.*, August 17, 1951.

[36]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1969), I, Pt. 11, Sec. 2, p. 565; *U.S. Census of Agriculture* (1974), I, Pt. 14, p. IV-422. Wayne Carmony has observed that on average he used five gallons of propane per 25 bushels of corn. A 125 bushels per acre corn crop thus required 25 gallons to dry the product of one acre—more energy than it took to grow the crop. Carmony to author, August 20, 1982.

[37]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1957, p. 9; Supplement to the 1961 Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Program.

every community commonly cooperated in this phase of the harvest. Farmers would spend two weeks or more, either as a hand or using a team of horses and a wagon, following the threshing crew in harvesting the wheat crop belonging to members of the ring. They spent another ten days to two weeks in threshing the oat crop.[38] A few pull-type combines appeared in the 1930s,[39] but by 1950, 407 farms had a total of 422 combines (see Appendix, Table A-4). These were primarily pull-type, although self-propelled combines for harvesting grain crops had begun to appear. By 1964, 172 farms had a self-propelled combine, while 420 farms accounted for 445 pull-type combines. A decade later 422 farms had 440 self-propelled grain and bean combines; almost half of these (215) had been purchased in the last five years.

The big, general purpose farm tractor led to the development of the self-propelled combine, an innovation as important in the grain fields as the McCormick reaper had been a century earlier. One machine integrated all the physical labor that had gone into cutting, shocking, and threshing and transferred the three operations into the field. Traditionally, when the wheat was harvested, it had to be cut, shocked, hauled to the barn, and threshed. The combine cut and threshed the wheat in one operation, stored the wheat in a hopper, and then emptied the wheat directly into a wagon or truck. In the mid-to-late 1950s, farmers began adding a two-row corn head to the combine, which made the harvesting of corn as easy as the harvesting of wheat and oats.[40] The advent of the combine with corn head marked the maturation of modern mechanical agriculture in the county. After this, farm machinery was mechanically improved and made larger (for example, a four-row head was in use by the 1960s), but no new improvements came along to drastically alter the face of agriculture. Not every farmer had a combine, as he did a tractor, and those who did were kept busy doing custom work for their neighbors.

Although mechanizing the harvest of the hay crop was never as important as it was for the grain crop, pick-up and automatic hay balers also helped reduce physical labor on the farm. In 1940 county farmers harvested their hay crop by cutting it with a pull-type mower and loading it on a wagon with a hay loader or pitching it on by hand. They used hay forks and slings to unload the wagons at the barn. Each summer fires caused by spontaneous combustion from the loose hay heating in the haymow destroyed a number of barns. Pick-up and automatic hay balers appeared in the county during and immediately following World War II. The early automatic hay balers required at least four persons to operate them. One person drove the tractor, one picked up the divider boards and placed them in the baler, and two rode the baler and threaded the wire between the bales.[41]

The increased use of the tractor and self-propelled harvesting equipment that helped do away with the need for the horse also made motor trucks a necessary part of farm equipment (see Table 5). In 1940 only a minority (390) of the county's 1,769 farms had motor trucks. The majority still used wagons for farm work and to haul farm products to market. The wagons had steel-banded wooden wheels or all-steel wheels. In fact, practically all wheeled farm equipment, including tractors, had some form of steel wheel in the 1940s. Rubber tire wheels did not begin to replace steel wheels until the late 1940s and early 1950s. By then, most farms were located on hard surface roads (708) or graded gravel roads (831), both of which deteriorated rapidly under the impact of steel wheels, particularly tractor wheels equipped with large steel lugs. Though farmers preferred

[38]Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 7; Wayne E. Kiefer, *Rush County, Indiana: A Study in Rural Settlement Geography* (Geographic Monograph Series, Department of Geography, Indiana University, 1969), p. 78.

[39]Rushville *Republican*, June 28, 1934; Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1940, p. 7. These were either run by a power take-off shaft from a tractor or by an engine on the combine. Carmony to author, August 20, 1982.

[40]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1955, p. 10.

[41]Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 7.

steel wheels on their tractors for field work because they gave better traction, the damage they did to road surfaces required that they be replaced. Since most farmers hauled their own grain to market, and many transported their own livestock, tractors and motor trucks with rubber tires became a necessity.[42] By 1978 most farms had at least one motor truck, and many had more than one.

The same technology that brought a decline in the physical labor needed to farm also helped improve the standard of living on the farm. In 1940 only the automobile had ceased to be a luxury, with 20 percent more cars on the farms than farm families. Many of the county's 1,769 farms still did not have telephones or electricity, and most farms still did not have running water inside the house. By 1950, however, virtually all farms had telephones and electricity, and many had inside running water. The county agricultural agent reported that by 1943 "Several started installing water pressure systems for providing running water, bathroom facilities, and furnaces in their homes."[43] Electrical power permitted 412 farms (out of 1,694) to have home freezers in 1950, 1,223 to have electric water pumps, 491 to have electric hot water heaters, and 1,422 to have electric washing machines. By 1954 television had come to have electric washing machines. By 1954 television had come to 1,265 county farms, making it as common as the radio had been a decade earlier, and apparently every farm family that wanted a home freezer had one. Indeed, home conveniences earlier found in the city became so common on the farm after 1959 that the agricultural census ceased reporting them.

The experience of the Carmony and Liggett families in acquiring home improvements probably did not differ substantially from that of many county farm families. The D. E. Carmony family obtained electricity about 1935, which was several years before a Rural Electric Membership Cooperative brought service to most county farms. Public Service Indiana ran a line to the family farmstead at a cost of about $800. Wayne Carmony remembers that having electric lights "was remarkable because you could see to read at night." Once they had electrical energy, appliances "came pretty fast." They had an electric water pump, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, and washing machine even before the war. They got their first freezer in 1947 and their first television in 1951. They would have had television sooner, but they felt some of the first network "programs were terrible." They purchased their first color television in 1965 and in 1970 put up a large antenna to get educational television. Wayne recalls, "That kind of opened up a new world to us." The Carmonys heated and cooked with coal stoves until 1945, when they purchased an electric stove and installed a gas furnace to provide central heating. By the early 1950s the Carmonys had everything in the way of physical conveniences commonly associated with town living. In 1979, like many of their urban brethren, they reverted to supplementing their central heating system with a woodburning stove.[44]

When Marion and Lois Liggett married in 1947, they began housekeeping in a house built in 1938. It had four rooms, electricity, and a single cold water faucet that provided inside running water. They bought a car for their honeymoon and got a hot water heater as a wedding gift. After a couple of years, Liggett built a bathroom in the house and in a few more years added another bedroom and a utility room. By the mid-1950s they had a comfortable house with six rooms and bath. They heated with oil heaters in each end of the house until 1956, when Liggett installed a gas furnace that provided central heat. Every time he had a good year farming, and the early 1950s were generally good years, he got something to make life a little easier for his wife. "If I modernize on the farm with something that saves me labor," he told a journalist in 1958, "I aim to get something for Lois. I got her an automatic washer, dryer, ironer. I have a clean shirt and pants everyday. We've got a freezer and

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[44] Carmony interview, pp. 35-41.

a TV. We're doing all right." Lois got a refrigerator in 1948, a freezer in 1950, and an automatic washer and dryer in 1952. The Liggetts got their first television, a black and white set, in 1954.[45] City dwellers had few conveniences not enjoyed by the Liggetts or the Carmonys or for that matter by most county farm families by the mid-1950s.[46]

One main result of the increased mechanization of agriculture was the ability of farmers to manage larger and larger units of land. The smaller, less efficient farm operator found it more and more difficult to compete successfully with the larger and more mechanized farmers. Table 3 indicates the broad dimension of the transformation that took place in the number and size of farms over the period 1935 to 1978. As the table shows, the number of county farms declined 55 percent while the size of farms increased 112 percent. Table A-5, in the Appendix, gives a more detailed breakdown of the transformation. The greatest decline in number of farms occurred in those ranging in size from 50 to 259 acres. Within this group the greatest decline was in farms that ranged in size from 70 to 99 and from 140 to 179 acres. Growth in the number of farms occurred in all categories above 259 acres, particularly in the number of farms ranging in size from 500 to 999 acres. These increased from 19 in 1940 to 118 in 1978, an increase of 521 percent. The transformation occurred gradually but steadily over the 38-year period, with generally not much more than a 20 percent change in any half decade. The exceptions were those categories above 500 acres, which showed more extreme fluctuation. This may be explained by the need for increased mechanization and in turn the need for increased acreage to make the most efficient use of machinery. The Marion Liggett farm in Jackson Township and the Wayne H. Carmony farm in Walker Township may serve to illustrate the impact of mechanization.

Marion Liggett was born in 1925 on a farm in the southeast corner of the state on what was called the "Miami Bottoms."[47] In the spring of 1932, in the depths of the Depression, when he was seven years old, his family moved to Rush County. They carried all their worldly possessions with them in an old truck and two horse-drawn wagons. The old truck was a Model T car with a wagon bed mounted where the back end of the car had been cut off. Marion recalls his father saying "If you can't make a living farming in Rush County, you can't make a living anywhere farming." His father began farming here in 1932, and it was from him that the son learned to farm. After graduation from high school in 1943, Marion worked for several years on his father's farm. When he married in 1947 he was earning $75 a month as a farm laborer. To support a wife he needed to go into farming on his own, so he rented 160 acres on a 50-50 shares basis and borrowed $2,800 to buy his own farm equipment. He furnished the labor and machinery, and paid half the expenses for seed and fertilizer; the owner furnished the land, the house, and farm buildings. In 1948 the owner bought an additional 80 acres, giving Liggett 240 acres to farm. The farm was actually three 80 acre farms that had been consolidated over time.

Liggett began farming as his father had before him, a traditional diversified farm. He prepared his seedbed, planted, and cultivated with a team of horses. He kept sheep, dairy cows, beef cattle, chickens, and hogs. He "worked from daylight to dark" without making the success of farming that he hoped for. He stopped raising sheep in 1948 to give himself more pasture land for his beef cattle, and in 1950 he got rid of the horses and began farming with a tractor. These changes were intuitive, and it was not until 1952, when he joined the individual farm

[45]John Bartlow Martin, "The Changing Midwest," *Saturday Evening Post* (January 11, 1958), p. 84; Liggett interview, p. 17.

[46]Rushville *Republican*, October 29, 1953.

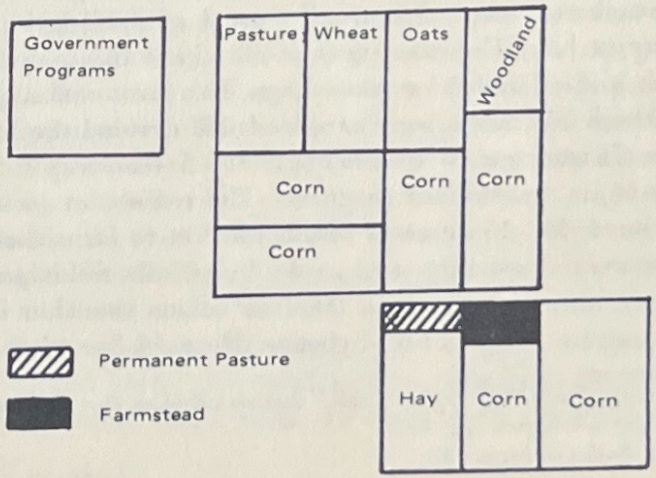
[47]This and subsequent information regarding the Liggett farm, unless otherwise indicated, comes from the Liggett interview.

planning program sponsored by Purdue University, that he learned how inefficient his farm operation had been. "You can't hide a hole," he candidly confessed. He had believed he was very efficient in livestock raising but inefficient in his crop production. From analysis through the Purdue program of the farm records he had kept since 1948, he learned differently. "I was raising more corn [averaged 44 bushels per acre] than I was giving myself credit [for]," he found, "and I wasn't as good raising hogs as I thought." The analysis focused on a truism for his farm operation in particular and for Rush County in general. "I had to utilize my land," he said. "The land is a beginning of it all. That's essential, that's why we're in Rush County. If you're going to mine coal, you have to go where the coal is. If you're going to farm, you better go where the [good] land is." Ninety percent of the tillable land in the county is corn producing land, so for successful farming the land dictates corn.

His records revealed he should specialize and expand. He rented another 40 acres, creating the 280 acre operating unit that he farmed until 1965. The beef cows had to go, but in 1952 he "just couldn't do it." "You get attached to those beef cows," he said. He waited until 1954 and lost money, not only because he sold the cows at a low price but also because he was pasturing them on ground on which he should have been raising corn. He needed more grain for his hogs; when the cattle went, he could put another field in corn and feed more hogs. It was not easy to break with tradition even for a young, progressive farmer like Liggett. He kept three family cows that he milked by hand morning and night because, as he said, "No matter where you are, those cows always bring you home . . . That's worth something." The chickens went next, not because the space they used was required for corn or hogs, but because commercial poultry houses wanted farm eggs candled and boxed to suit the way supermarkets wanted them. He did not have the time or energy to do this, so he stopped raising chickens. In this way he came gradually to specialize in corn and hogs. In 1964 even the

Marion and Lois Liggett.

Figure 7. Liggett Farm



milk cows went, a forsaking of the last remnant of traditional diversified farming.[48]

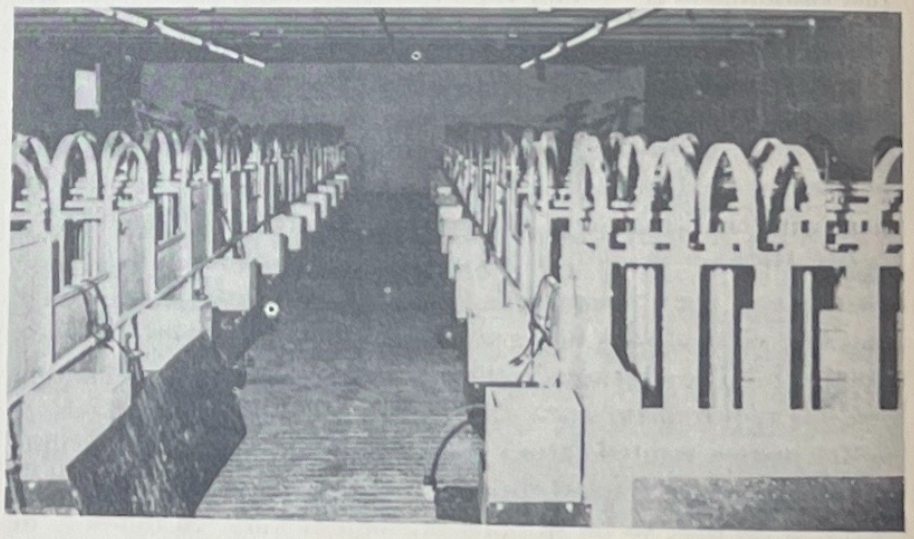
From 1952 onward, Liggett began organizing his farm for more efficient production of corn and hogs. This meant investment in new farm machinery as need warranted and money permitted. Like many farmers, he did not like going deeply into debt even for new labor saving equipment; he could wait until he had the cash and the equipment had proved itself. He gradually accumulated the machinery—a combine, another tractor equipped with a hydraulic lift, a hay baler, a steel bin for shelled corn, and drying equipment—that allowed him to operate his 280 acres more efficiently. By 1966 his inventory of farm equipment included:[49] 4 tractors; 3 plows; 2 discs; 1 four-row planter; two-row mounted corn picker; self-propelled combination corn picker and sheller, and combine; 2 wagons; 1 forty-foot elevator; 1 two-row grass and stalk chopper; 1 mower; 1 side-delivery rake; 1 hay baler; 1 seventeen shovel wheat drill; 1 rotary hoe; 1 ten-foot cultipacker; 1 complete feed mill; and 1 truck.

Liggett started farming in 1947 using a 5 year crop rotation—2 years of corn, 1 of small grain, and 2 of pasture or hay. When he sold off his beef cattle in 1954, he kept the 5 year rotation but changed it to 3 years of corn, 1 of small grain, and 1 of pasture or hay. The extra year of corn gave him more grain with which to feed and raise more hogs. The farm contained 280 acres, of which 252 acres were cropland. He divided the farm (see Figure 7) into ten 20 acre fields in the 5 year crop rotation and one field in government programs. The remainder included an 8 acre home lot, 15 acres of woods too wet to farm, and 5 acres of permanent pasture next to the house. Six fields produced corn every year, and he planted the four others in either wheat, oats, hay, pasture, or possibly soybeans. He used five of the fields

[48]John Bird, "Farewell to Farmer Tuttle," *Saturday Evening Post* (December 4, 1965), p. 34; Liggett interview, pp. 3-18.

[49]Kiefer, *Rush County*, p. 127.

Hog houses on the Liggett farm.



Confined sow farrowing crates.

in the McLean County system of hog production (described later in this chapter). He planted these fields in 3 years of corn, 1 year of wheat or oats, and 1 year of pasture. The other five fields he rotated in the same way except that the pasture became hay. He harvested nearly 120 acres of corn every year, which he fed entirely to his hogs.[50]

After he sold off his cattle, Liggett increased his hog inventory to 30 sows that he farrowed twice a year in individual hog houses. Each house held a sow and her litter. All the houses were homemade and easily moved from field to field with a special hydraulic lift that he had designed and built for his tractor. His sows averaged about six pigs per litter, giving him between 300 and 400 hogs annually to market. He moved the sow and her litter from the farrowing houses to the field in a special crate that he transported like the hog houses. He kept some hogs in semi-confinement on cement at the barn during the winter, but in the spring he moved them to the clover or sod field. He turned most of the sows into the corn fields in the fall after he had harvested the corn and sheltered them in the hog barn north of the house during the winter. When the hogs gleaned the corn fields, they got plenty of exercise and did not become overly fat during the winter.[51]

Rather than raise purebred stock, Liggett chose to raise crossbreeds as did most Rush County farmers. When farrowing time approached, he brought the sows to the farmstead and put them in the farrowing crates or individual hog houses to give birth to their litters. After the young pigs were about ten days old, he moved them from the farmstead to the hog field. He usually kept a sow for six litters at most, but if hog prices were high he would sell the sows and breed new gilts after two litters. Hog sales accounted for a major portion of his income, but he also sold wheat and occasionally soybeans for cash. He supplemented his income by doing custom combining, picking, and baling.

At first Liggett fed ear corn in the field from rail corncribs that he easily moved from field to field. In 1959 he began to change over to shelled corn that he artificially dried and stored in a metal corncrib. It cost only about 30 cents per bushel to store shelled corn (when propane cost 9 cents a gallon) versus about 50 cents a bushel to store ear corn. The shift from feeding ear corn to shelled corn forecast the disappearance of one of Rush County's most common sights—the corncrib. Though corncribs came in a variety of shapes and sizes, all shared one common feature: they could easily be torn down and moved from field to field. The most interesting and unusual portable crib was square and made of rails that were stacked like wooden matches. They were the original corncribs used in the county and were built of wooden fence rails that farmers obtained when they replaced their early fences with wire.[52]

In 1964 Liggett went to 60 sows and multiple farrowing, which is the practice of having several litters of pigs arrive at different times throughout the year. The main advantage to multiple farrowing is that it provides packing houses with a more even supply of hogs, lowers the packers' per unit cost of operation, and permits them to give farmers a better price. Multiple farrowing does not require additional equipment, but it does require more efficient use of equipment and careful attention to cleanliness. Liggett stayed with a four-litter multiple farrowing system for ten years, but finally gave it up and went back to his old two-litter system. Maintaining the health of his hogs under the multiple farrowing system was too much for him. "I had too many sows," he said. "I didn't keep my facilities empty long enough to clean out; I had to go to using medication; and I worked hard." He continued to raise hogs for another three years, until 1977, when he completely abandoned hog raising.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 118-27.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 120; Liggett interview, p. 13.

[52] Kiefer, *Rush County*, pp. 96, 120, 125.

Liggett had marketed between 700 and 900 pigs or about 200,000 pounds of hogs annually. The instability of the hog market and the scarcity of qualified help, however, proved too much for him. "I can't hardly hire anybody to take care of livestock," he explained, "but I can hire field help." "You know," he continued, "you got your money once in that corn and then you add your labor to it and your investment and things and try to get your money the second time out of hogs." The problems inherent in hog raising caused him to declare with an air of frustration, "I raised a lot of hogs just for the fun of it. We used to run four year cycles, . . . one year you lost, one year you broke even, then you made good money, the next you broke even, then you lost."

When Liggett increased his hog production in 1964, he also expanded his machinery and the number of acres he farmed. To raise more hogs he changed his harvesting procedures and needed a self-propelled combine. In order to justify borrowing the money for the new and bigger equipment he had to have more land to farm. "Here sits this pile of investment," he explained; "well you have got to say, you are going to run so many hundred acres through it" to justify the investment. He rented 143 acres more and purchased 27 acres for himself giving him a total of 450 acres of which 432 acres were cropland. He bought a new 100 horsepower tractor and a five-bottom plow. With this new equipment he felt he could handle 450 acres "pretty good." To store his increased corn production, he built a second steel bin for shelled corn; in 1972 he built a third that would hold 6,500 bushels. To feed the additional hogs he built and installed a grinder and a mixer to blend homegrown feed with supplement. Augers moved the mix to a feeder wagon he used to transport the feed to the hog fields or in the winter to the confinement lot. His new equipment, as he said, made "things handy," but that was not good enough. As noted previously, in 1977 he went entirely into grain production.

While he raised hogs, Liggett rotated his crops so that he had clean grass fields for his hogs each year. Land was becoming so valuable, however, that he "couldn't afford to raise hogs on it" anymore. He had to farm the land he had been using for hog pasture and either put his hogs in confinement or get rid of them. Most of his fencing was more than twenty years old and needed to be replaced. After discussing the situation with the owner of the land with whom he had sharecropped for thirty years, he decided to get rid of the hogs and go completely to grain. He began to pull fences and to plant continuous corn immediately. Six of his original ten fields went into one 120 acre field the first year. With the pulling of his fences, Liggett heralded the disappearance of still another feature of the traditional Rush County farm scene—the ubiquitous fence row. Where once fences broke up the landscape into small fields, now broad fields cover the scene.

In thirty years Marion Liggett had changed from a diversified farmer to a commercial grain farmer. For the man and his machines the 450 acres he now farmed appeared to be just about right. "You get bigger and bigger," he observed, "and your efficiency goes down, and your cost comes up. So you want to guide yourself so you are just a little bit inefficient." If he gets behind at planting or harvest time, he can hire occasional labor. He sells his grain to jobbers, shipping most of it out by semitrailer. If he needs to store anything, it is usually beans because they are worth so much more than corn. He can store quite a bit on the farm, and, if his storage is not enough, he can buy or rent more. What he cannot store, he sells. He could make a bigger investment in machinery and perhaps save on labor, but "there is a happy medium." Besides, he adds, "there is no use in going out here and pushing yourself to the limit and then when the 15th of April comes you really pay Uncle Sam."[53]

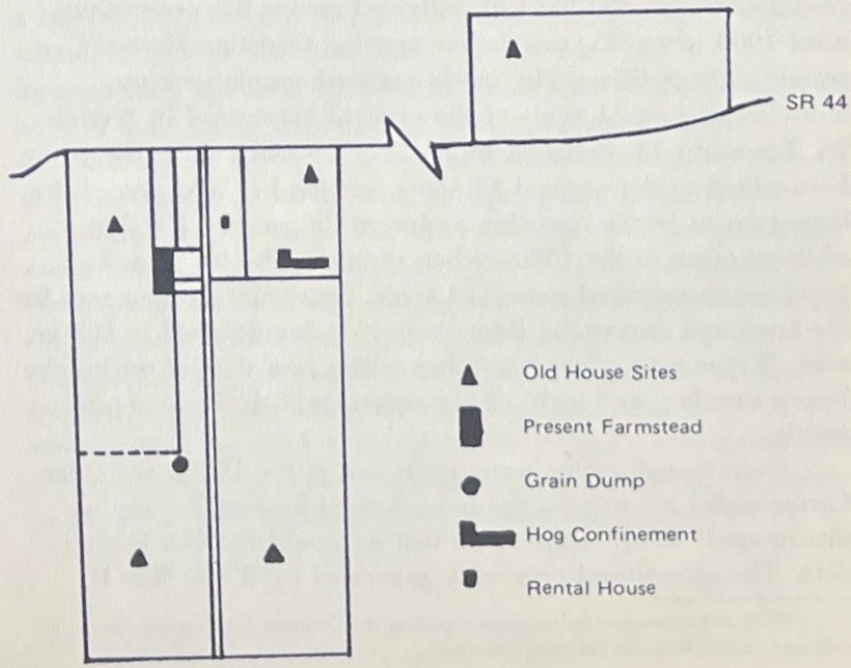
[53]Liggett interview, pp. 6-20. The county agricultural agent during this period noted that one of the biggest changes in county agriculture was "the acceptance of farming as a business rather than a way of life." Spuller, "Agricultural Changes," p. 4.

Table 6. Farm Ownership by Category

Year	1940		1944		1950		1954		1959		1964		1969		1974		1978	
Farm Ownership	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full Owner	844	48	818	45	800	47	724	46	615	45	517	45	620	55	543	52	450	47
Part Owner	217	12	243	13	234	14	250	16	267	20	302	26	283	25	303	29	300	32
Tenant	697	39	759	42	656	39	600	38	477	35	319	29	228	20	192	19	198	21
Total Number	1,769		1,828		1,694		1,582		1,366		1,144		1,131		1,038		948	

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Figure 8. D. E. Carmony Farm, Inc.



While the 280 to 450 acres he farmed represented the most common size farm after 1950, as a tenant farmer Liggett was not typical of the majority of county farmers. The number of tenant farmers reached a peak of 42 percent in 1944 and declined steadily thereafter (see Table 6). The largest category of farm ownership was the full owner farm. This category of farm fluctuated between 45 and 48 percent of all farms in the county until 1969, when it rose to 55 percent. It dropped back to 47 percent in 1978. In this regard the D. E. Carmony Farm, incorporated as a family owned and operated farm, is more representative. Today Wayne H. Carmony owns the farm, having inherited it from his father, David Ezra Carmony.

Wayne is the fourth generation of his family to farm the land. The first was his maternal great-grandfather, Christian Hertzel, who planted his first crop there in the 1840s.[54] Down through the years the farm land acquired by his great-grandfather was divided and redivided among his descendants until 1908 when Wayne's father married Christian Hertzel's granddaughter, Olive. The newly married couple took up housekeeping on 41 acres of the original homestead in Section 22, Township 13, Range 8, in Walker Township. Over the years Ezra added to the original 41 acres, making his farm one of the largest farms in the township and even the county. His first addition came in the 1920s, when through inheritance and purchase he acquired some 114 acres. Ezra paid $265 an acre for the land, and during the Depression its value dropped to $65 an acre. Wayne remembers his father telling him that all during the Depression he owed more on the mortgage than the land was worth.

Even though prices were down during the 1930s, the elder Carmony did not expand the farm, largely because he was "so discouraged" by the Depression that he would not risk further debt. The agricultural prosperity generated by World War II rekindled his optimism, and during the 1940s he added 340 more acres to his farm. With more than 490 acres, he had one of the largest farms in the county. During the 1950s he continued to increase his acreage; in 1959, when he incorporated the farm for inheritance purposes, he had over 550 acres. When the elder Carmony died in 1961, Wayne and his brother and sister inherited the farm. Under their management the farm continued to grow, reaching over 670 acres by the end of the 1960s. In 1971 the heirs divided the farm, and Wayne became the sole proprietor of just over 400 acres. Wayne retained his father's name on the farm observing that he could change the name to his own if he wanted to, but he just wasn't egotistical enough to go to the trouble.

The growth of both the Liggett and Carmony farms over the years illustrates an important aspect of county agriculture—the consolidation of small farm parcels into one large farm. Liggett did it through renting land; the Carmonys did it through proprietorship. At no time did any of the Carmony land acquisitions exceed much over 80 acres, and most ranged from 40 to 60 acres. One acquisition was only 0.35 of an acre.[55] Figure 8, showing the present D. E. Carmony, Inc. farm, indicates the old house sites located on the property. The Carmonys kept some of the old buildings from the smaller farms, using them as rental houses or ancillary buildings for their farm operation, but many were moved or destroyed to open up the old farmsteads to crops and more efficient use of machinery.

Ezra Carmony got his first tractor, a 20 horsepower Fordson, in 1918. It was a general purpose utility tractor he used to pull a 2-12 Little Genius plow and a 7 foot disc cultivator. In addition, he used the tractor's belt drive to operate a corn sheller. In 1926 he purchased a 30 horsepower 15-30 International that he used for field work and heavy belt work. With it he powered his separator and a hammer mill that ground corn for his cattle.

[54]This and subsequent information regarding the Carmony farm, unless otherwise indicated, comes from the Carmony interview.

[55]Walker Township Transfer Books, 1919-1980, County Auditor's Office, Rush County Courthouse; Carmony interview, pp. 8-10.

These tractors helped him, but he still needed twelve horses for much of the farm work.[56] As one writer observed at the time, "the tractor has replaced some of the work stock on a great many farms. With the improvements that are being made in tractors, it is difficult to foresee the extent to which tractors will eventually replace horses on American farms, but it is not likely that the horse will ever be entirely displaced. At least one team will be necessary on most farms."[57] Or so it seemed.

Through the 1930s and 1940s, Carmony continued to farm with both tractors and horses (see Appendix, Table A-6). Though he bought and sold several tractors during the 1930s and increased his combined tractor power from about 45 to about 55 horsepower, he never had more than two tractors at any one time—a main field tractor and a specialty tractor. He still used nine draft horses, particularly for heavy tillage work. During the 1940s he added a third tractor and about doubled his tractor horsepower. By 1947 he had enough tractor power that he no longer needed his draft horses for farming. He kept them, however, until 1951, largely because he "did not have the heart to sell them, knowing they would be slaughtered for dog food." He had worked with them so long that they were "almost members of the family." The economics of modern agriculture prevailed over sentiment for Carmony as they did for many county farmers; his abandonment of horses in 1951 coincided with their general departure from the county (see Table 5). The early 1950s marked the end of an era and the completion of the transition from horse power to tractor power in the county.

During the 1950s Ezra Carmony got a fourth tractor, which increased his total tractor power to about 160 horsepower. At that time he had two main work tractors and two specialty tractors, including the 1955 Ford tractor with a power dump bucket for feeding cattle. As they added more land to their farm, the Carmony brothers, Wayne and Warren, added a third main work tractor, the 4020 John Deere, in 1965. This gave them a total of four tractors with a combined power of over 240 horsepower. When Wayne Carmony took over sole proprietorship of the farm in the 1970s, he changed two tractors and increased the number of tractors on the farm to five. One of the new tractors was a specialty tractor, the 70 John Deere skid steer loader; the other was a main work tractor, the 4640 John Deere. This was a heavy tillage tractor that he needed when he went to one person doing all the heavy tillage work. With two main field tractors and three specialty tractors, Wayne had a combined tractor power of over 400 horsepower.

Each new tractor brought not only increases in horsepower but other improvements as well. The 1938 A John Deere had a tricycle wheel arrangement with rubber tires on the front wheels that made it easier to maneuver and move through the corn rows for cultivation. The 1941 A John Deere had a hydraulic system, a battery starter, lights, fenders, and rubber tires on the drive wheels as well as the front. The 1943 8N Ford had a hydraulically operated 3-point hitch that allowed the operator to control more easily the depth of plowing, planting, and cultivation. In addition, the 3-point hitch made it easier than the old stationary drawbar to hook up equipment, saving time in preparing for field work. The 1954 44D Special Massey Harris was the first to have a live power take-off (PTO) to replace the cumbersome and sometimes dangerous belt drive mechanism of earlier tractors. This was also a diesel tractor, marking the beginning of the Carmonys' conversion from gasoline to diesel fuel for power. The 1957 444D Massey Harris had power steering, and the 1965 4020D John Deere had a soundproof and air conditioned cab.[58] Air conditioning made the long, hot hours in the field more bearable, while soundproofing saved the

[56]D. E. Carmony, Inc., Farm Records.

[57]Quotation in Kiefer, *Rush County*, pp. 75-76.

[58]D. E. Carmony, Inc., Farm Records.

operator's hearing. As horsepower increased, the roar of the larger engines became a real health hazard.[59]

Because of their low horsepower, the early tractors were used mainly for planting and cultivation of crops and as a power source to operate separators and other equipment. As their power and size increased in the 1930s, they began to be used more in harvesting as well. Ezra Carmony got his first corn picker in 1936, a two-row pull type with a tractor hitch that he bought for $625. Wayne Carmony remembers that it was "really something to have a corn picker." Until then corn picking had been a hand operation with every ear picked, shucked, thrown into a wagon, hauled to the farmstead, and scooped into the corncrib. Corn harvesting was a long, boring task that often dragged through the winter. The Carmonys' first picker delivered the shucked corn out of the side into a wagon pulled by a team of horses. Not all the early corn pickers operated smoothly. Some "not only picked the corn, it picked the stalk and pulled the roots out, and put the whole thing on the wagon." Despite such drawbacks, the mechanical corn picker was the most important piece of new equipment to become available to county farmers in the 1930s and 1940s.[60] (See Appendix, Table A-7 for detail on the Carmonys' harvesting equipment.)

As long as tractor horsepower remained low, farmers had to open a field by hand picking and husking, or waste corn by trampling the first few rows of a field. Even when tractor power increased, and the wagon was hitched directly beside the corn picker and the tractor pulled them both, some hand picking or waste continued. The self-propelled corn picker eliminated the problems of opening a field. Carmony bought his first self-propelled corn picker that had enough power to pull a wagon behind it in 1955. With this he could open a field without wasting corn or doing any hand picking. The Carmonys continued to harvest ear corn until 1963, when they purchased a combine with a 2-row corn head and began harvesting and drying shell corn. Some county farmers had begun harvesting shell corn as early as 1955,[61] but like Marion Liggett the Carmonys did not have to be first.

Ezra Carmony got his first combine in 1943, a pull-type 12A John Deere that had a 6-foot cut. He pulled the combine with a tractor, and a separate engine on the combine drove the separator unit that threshed the wheat. The scarcity of labor during the war and after proved the value of the combine, and Carmony got a second 12A John Deere in 1949. He harvested with the two combines until 1959, when he stopped growing wheat and went mainly to corn and soybeans. He then sold the combines and thereafter hired custom harvesters for the combining he needed done. In 1963, when the Carmony brothers returned to growing wheat and started shelling corn, they bought the new 45 John Deere grain and bean combine that had a 26-inch cylinder with a 2-row corn head mentioned above. The unit had a 10-foot platform and was powered by a 45 horsepower engine. Within two years they put the farm in continuous corn, and the new equipment proved inadequate. The experience reminded Wayne of an observation his father had made to the effect that a farmer "can spend a lifetime buying bigger equipment." In 1965 Wayne replaced the John Deere with a New Idea combine that had a 36-inch cylinder and in 1972 replaced this one with another New Idea.

The transition to shell corn in 1963 marked the disappearance of the corncrib from the Carmony farm. In its place the brothers built corn bins and eventually the central grain dump (see Figure 8) that they completed in 1966. The grain dump is a central storage area that includes weighing scales, dump pits, dryers, and a bucket-type vertical lift that carries the dried grain to downspouts that in turn carry it by gravity to large storage bins. The grain dump also includes feed

[59]Wayne Carmony observed, "I'm losing part of my hearing. I'm 47 years old and I've already beat my ear drums out with some of this stuff." Carmony interview, p. 19.

[60]*Ibid.*, p. 12; Kiefer, *Rush County*, p. 77.

[61]Annual Report of the Rush County Agricultural Agent, 1955, p. 4.

supplement and storage bins. A portable grinder-mixer feed wagon processes and delivers feed to the hogs in the fields and in confinement.[62]

The Carmony brothers' shift to shell corn resulted from the need to find a substitute for labor.[63] In 1940 Ezra Carmony farmed some 400 acres with three full-time and two part-time workers. In 1980 his son Wayne, with the help of his wife, farmed some 400 acres. Machines made the farmer less dependent on hired help, but it is doubtful whether it made farming easier for the farm operator. At least Wayne questions whether it did. "I know it's the damn truth," he lamented, "that the more mechanisms we have, the easier it is mechanically and all, [but] then circumstance just dictates that we have to do more. So you're working the same hours or even maybe more. The nervous strain and stresses of keeping everything going . . . you have to be a jack of all trades and master of none."

Hog raising produced the greatest stress and strain because, as Marion Liggett noted, a farmer does twice the work. Perhaps because of this the number of farms raising hogs has steadily declined in the county since 1940, and the actual number of hogs raised and sold has been declining since 1964. In 1940 almost 90 percent of the county's farms raised and sold hogs; by 1978 less than half the county farms (43.9 percent) did so. This change marks a significant transformation of agriculture in the county, for as Wayne E. Kiefer had noted in his study of county agriculture, "Hog production is as much a part of the county's heritage as the pioneer families . . . ."[64]

In part this transformation resulted from the mechanization of hog raising that followed from the mechanization of crop production. Down to the 1950s Ezra Carmony annually farrowed about forty sows that gave him two litters of about six piglets each or about 480 hogs a year. With a two litter system, he marketed his hogs in the spring and fall. Like most county farmers he used what was called the McLean County, Illinois, system of hog production. The system was designed to prevent hog cholera by moving the hogs to a clean pasture each year. Doing this, a farmer prevented the hog lots from becoming the diseased wallows that they readily became when the same fields were used year after year. The system, while very healthy for hogs, was labor intensive because much of the work in the feeding field was done by hand. It was also time consuming for the farmer because he had to travel back and forth from farmstead to feeding field. Along with the corncrib that was used in the field for feeding, the farmer used an assemblage of hog houses and various contraptions to provide shade for the animals. He usually piped water to the fields from a separate well and pumphouse.

The farmer usually used five fields in the system—three in corn, one in small grain, and one in legumes for a hog pasture. He never took the hay crop off the pasture field, and what remained after one season as a hog pasture he plowed down the following year when he planted his corn. He put the hogs in a clean pasture every year and returned them to the same field only once every five years. If he kept the hogs in one field for several years, it made the field undesirable for other uses; when he moved them every year, the hogs did no damage to the field. Most importantly, the time interval gave ample opportunity for any animal parasites to die.[65]

Ezra Carmony began to abandon the McLean County system in the late 1950s when he increased his herd to about sixty sows and began multiple farrowing. Pigs now came anytime from the first of December to the end of August, and he could no longer follow the traditional system. Instead he began to move toward

[62]D. E. Carmony, Inc., Farm Records; Carmony interview, pp. 17-25.

[63]"Mechanical power," said Ralph O. Brown, an official of the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative, "has become an essential for the effective use of high-priced farm labor." Rushville *Republican*, February 19, 1948.

[64]Kiefer, *Rush County*, p. 91; Carmony interview, pp. 21, 24.

[65]Information regarding the McLean County, Illinois, system of hog production comes from Kiefer, *Rush County*, pp. 95-99.

confinement hog raising and mechanization of his hog raising operation. This meant essentially centralized farrowing houses and feedlots, mechanized feeding, supplemental heat for winter piglets, ventilation systems for the centralized farrowing houses, and more problems with disease. It also meant more use of mixed breeds of hogs especially adapted to confinement. Marion Liggett also expanded his hog operation about this time, as did other hog raisers in the county. The average number of hogs raised per farm in the county showed a 51.6 percent increase between 1954 and 1959. The Carmony farm never went to a complete confinement practice for raising hogs, instead choosing a modified system that retained a hog pasture.

The abandonment of the McLean County system heralded a renewed emphasis on grain production that labor scarcity encouraged and technology promoted. The 1950s were transitional years not only in hog production but in grain production as well. During the decade corn production increased by more than 1.1 million bushels annually, while soybean production increased by almost 300,000 bushels. Only wheat production declined because, like the Carmonys, many farmers stopped planting the crop; over 400 fewer farms planted wheat in 1959 than had planted it in 1949. The technological and scientific advances that reduced the physical labor of farming also dictated the crops farmers should plant.

Fertilizers, improved seed, insecticides, herbicides, and above all mechanization allowed fewer farmers to grow more food, but at a continually increasing expense to the farmer. The cost of raising corn in the 1950s ran to about $49 an acre.[66] This included the direct costs of seed, fertilizer, fuel, and hired labor, and the indirect costs of land, mortgage interest, and taxes. Today it costs a farmer between $200 and $250 to raise an acre of corn.[67] This means that at $2 a bushel he needs to harvest at least a 100 bushels per acre before he realizes one penny from his investment, his labor, and his risk. Science and technology have increased farm productivity, but they have also made farming a much riskier business. As Wayne Carmony has observed, "The higher the yield you get the more dependent and precarious" things become.[68]

In forty years science and technology had transformed Rush County agriculture to diversified commercial farming. In the process, most of the romance and much of the way of life that farming had offered was gone. For the men and their machines the land they farmed represented a business, not a way of life. "You get bigger and bigger," Marion Liggett observed, "and your efficiency goes down, and your cost comes up. So you want to guide yourself so you are just a little bit inefficient." Marion's dependence on his equipment is never far distant from his thoughts. Inanimate machines, rather than horses, or hogs, or cows, determine the rhythm of his farm. Where he formerly lived to farm, he now farms to live. The psychic rewards that diversified agriculture had provided to make farming a way of life were no longer there. "You have to take time to live," Marion said. "The older I get, the more I can see in that."[69]

Farmers like Marion Liggett and Wayne Carmony stayed in farming, but many others did not. For still others, perhaps most, farming became a part-time occupation. Liggett, who operated a farm of 450 acres in 1979, considered himself "half retired." One full-time farmer, who should know, has observed that with the big farm machinery of today a person can farm as much as 300 acres of corn and beans with less than twenty days of full-time farm work a year.[70] In 1978 the average size of a farm in Rush County was 247 acres, and only 364 of the county's farms were 260 acres or more. If Liggett could farm 450 acres and consider himself "half retired," and if it is true that only twenty days of full-time work are needed to farm 300 acres, then it is

[66]Rushville *Republican*, October 26, 1957.

[67]Brashaber interview, p. 1.

[68]Carmony interview, p. 50.

[69]Liggett interview, p. 19.

[70]Wayne Carmony conversation with author, August 8, 1980.

not unreasonable to assume that most of Rush County's farmers are part-time farmers. When asked about the future of the family farm Liggett replied, "Don't worry, there's a young man wanting to farm."[71] That may be true, but he will not likely be a farmer in the traditional sense of the word. More likely he will be a part-time machine operator in an agricultural factory putting industrial products into the soil and extracting an agricultural product.

[71]Liggett interview, p. 7.

Modern corncribs—steel in the back and made of board rails (2 inches by 6 inches by 10 feet) in the foreground.

A Dream Come True

By Angela Daniels, grade 8

The year is nineteen and forty-eight. It is May. America is struggling to forget the war.

A young boy breathlessly waits beside an old battered pick-up. He pops grape flavored bubble gum between his teeth, and pulls his cap tighter on his thatch of jet-black hair. As a kind-faced man lumbers toward him, the boy can barely conceal his excitement!

Today is a special day. It is the day his father, the man now nearing the truck, had promised to take him to Kirklin Implement Sales at 120 S. Morgan!

"Hop in, Stan," the man orders gruffly.

Not even bothering to hold at bay his rising emotions, Stan clambers inside the truck. His small legs dangle off the edge of the seat.

When they pull up in front of the implement shop, Stan wants to clutch his heart, as though he fears it will jump right out of his bony chest. "This is it!" his mind cries out. "My dream is coming true!"

As they tour, he gazes at the magnificent mechanical horses with awe. How he craves to drive one! How he dreams of all that power beneath his fingertips!

The drive home is soothing to Stan's jumbled emotions. The hypnotic rhythm of the engine soon lulls him to sleep.

The boy dreams of becoming a farmer. Do you know what? That's exactly what happens! What began as a dream of the forties, materializes as a reality.

America began as a dream and became a reality. Rushville's past residents had dreams and developed them. In essence, they laid a trail for us to follow. What trail shall we lay for the future?

The Common Rail

No other tool or piece of equipment was so versatile, and it influenced men and men's lives in many ways. In early Rush County many of the straight grained trees, such as walnut, were rolled into piles near the cabin and left to dry. These were split into rails. Pictures in my old history book showing Young Abe Lincoln splitting logs into rails with an axe gave me a false impression of how they were split until I tried to split one with an axe. Mauls and hardwood wedges were the tools mostly used. The maul was a knot or burl cut from an elm tree, a hole bored or burned into it and a hickory handle inserted. Thus a heavy, almost indestructible, hammer was made. The wedges were made from some kind of hardwood and of various lengths and widths. With these two homemade tools and a common axe, the early farmer was able to split the logs on his farm and fence it.

Two types of fences were made, the straight rail fence ran from post to post. This was a permanent type and required posts being set every eleven feet, with holes bored through them and rails sharpened to fit snugly in the holes. Fences of this type usually were three to five rails high. They would turn horses or cattle but were not so good for hogs or chickens. The snake fence was so constructed that it zig-zagged, and where each zig met a zag, a fence corner was made; so about every eight or ten feet, you had a fence corner on each side of the fence. Any of these corners could be opened into gaps to use temporarily, or posts could be set and a gate hung. A well-built fence ten rails high was considered ideal and was talked of as "bull proof, horse high, and hog tight." Many of these fences stood and did their work for 100 years.

The early corn cribs were made of rails, a practice followed until World War II. They were built much like a log cabin but had no doors or windows. A layer of brush or corn stalks or sometimes rails was laid on the ground on a high spot, and the pen was started with about forty rails. This made a square pen about ten feet by ten feet and about the height of the wagon. Corn was scooped until the pen was rounded high in the middle, then more rails were added. This process went on until the scooper could no longer scoop high enough to get the corn over the side. Farmers prided themselves on the height of their cribs. The high cribs quietly told any passerby of the strength of the farmer who lived there and told would-be thieves to move on to shorter corn cribs. Rails were laid big end to little end to keep the top almost level. The last few layers of rails were allowed to slope slightly to the west, so the water could run off the wide planks which were used as a roof.

Corn was removed from these doorless cribs by knocking out about three rails from the bottom on each side. Corn could then roll out the bottom. With rails gone only little pigs could get into the cribs. Old sows and fat hogs cleaned up the corn and more corn rolled out. This was an early self-feeder.

Nearly every job on the farm used rails for something. Most wagons had a handy place to carry a rail or two just in case one was needed. In later years, they were often used to jack up one wheel of a Model T Ford, as they cranked much easier when one hind wheel was clear of the ground, or to change a tire.

Woven wire fences slowly brought an end to the rail fence. Farmers began to build wire stretches and take up the old "snakes." These removed rails were leaned against trees in the pasture in a capital A formation, like long wooden tents, waiting to be put to a use at other jobs. The Great Depression came; farmers and their hands hard up for fuel used the buck saw on these beautiful walnut rails and burned them in air-tight stoves. World War II closed, and we saw no rail fences and fewer rail cribs; these were replaced by cheap oak Napoleon cribs which were in turn replaced by metal bins for shelled corn.

Jim Scott, Richland